

Naessian deep ecology, political action and the climate crisis

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IV

Abstract

This thesis starts by asking whether Naessian deep ecology can be part of the answers we need in order to solve the climate crisis. The thesis presents four main claims that argue why deep ecology, as presented by Naess, is implausible however, as part of the solution for the global crisis without radical change. The four claims are: 1) there is a clear lack of coherence in deep ecology between theory and practice, and also within the theory, 2) a change in consciousness is not reliable as a solution to the global crisis, 3) the quality of life versus standard of living debate yields nothing of value because these terms and their meaning are too culture-dependent, and 4) Naess is more shallow in his approach to environmental philosophy than he claims to be. Moreover, the thesis highlights that the deep ecology platform, because it embraces the ideas of intrinsic value and a change in consciousness, is the major source of misfortune for deep ecology. My findings show that the apron diagram is the strongest part of Naessian deep ecology because of its pluralistic nature, as long as the deep ecology platform is heavily altered, the diagram can function as a starting ground for a new and improved theory that might be more apt in being part of the solution for climate crisis.

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Introduction

During the last few decades there has been a constant debate about the environment and the nature of the global crisis we are facing, and whether there is in fact a global crisis. In this thesis ‘global crisis’ more specifically refers to climate change. Currently, most scientists and professionals agree that climate change is happening, and that our actions – and perhaps also our, at times, lack of action – are accelerating the changes. Both layman and professionals alike have been part of the debate, but nonetheless we seem to be no closer to a solution. This thesis starts from the assumption that the world is facing a global climate crisis that needs to be rectified. From there, I will explore whether the environmental philosophy developed by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess¹, known as deep ecology, could be of help as part of the solution to the crisis.²

Mouchang Yu and Yi Lei argue that “deep ecology is an important vision in environmental philosophy”.³ This statement is intriguing because deep ecology does not yield much concerning environmental philosophy’s contribution regarding the climate crisis. When I started to mentally shape the content of my thesis, I initially intended to defend Naessian deep ecology, because on a personal level I enjoyed reading his books *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* and *Ecology of Wisdom*. However, through reading Naess’ material with a different purpose in mind, namely researching whether deep ecology could in fact be part of the solution for climate change, it became clearer that Naess’ theory is idealistic, incoherent and practically problematic. The deeper into the theory one goes, the greater the understanding becomes, that the main problem for deep ecology is the deep ecology platform. By shifting the focus from the deep ecology platform to the apron diagram, at least one part of deep ecology might be useful in the process towards a healthier environment and more stabilised temperatures.

In his book, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Naess displays a positive faith in the deep ecological movement as the way forward in regards to rectifying the environmental crisis.⁴ The deep ecology platform is the tool that enables the movement to keep its focus in addition to functioning as a sort of gathering point in which the supporters can find common ground.

¹ Because this thesis is written in English, and because Naess is spelled Naess in English, I will use the English version of Naess throughout the thesis.

² Naess speaks more of an environmental crisis than climate crisis.

³ M. Yu and Y. Lei, ‘Deep ecology: from duty to ecological consciousness’, in *Environment and Development*, Y. Ding, and T. Cuiweixili eds., in *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Developed under the Auspices of the UNESCO, Eolss Publishers, <http://www.eolss.net>, accessed April 30th 2014.

⁴ A. Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2001.

The platform functions as a centring point for deep ecology's normative approach, and for the diverse background of the deep ecology movement's supporters. Naess states that as the movement has seen a formidable growth from the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s, the prognoses for future growth for the movement, is very optimistic. However, he also acknowledges that deep ecology's opposing forces have shown similar growth patterns, and the outlook is one of continued growth also for them.⁵

Since people became aware of the crisis a few decades ago, there have been changes for the better in regards to regulations, policies and laws concerning the environment. A lot of resources are being utilised in an attempt to lessen the impact on Earth's natural cycles, but still no major change appears to happen, and the situation keeps worsening.⁶ Increased levels of CO₂, methane and other GHG's (Greenhouse gases) speed up global warming and magnify the climate crisis. The natural climate cycle on the planet is tampered with due to man's massive overshoot of natural, unrestorable resources, and the amount of GHGs released into the atmosphere. Due to the escalation of the climate crisis the last couple of decades, it seems we can make the evaluation that deep ecology and the movement have in fact not managed to keep momentum and affect major change on the environmental scene – though it is not alone as it would appear that no other theory or attempt have been successful either.⁷ Anyway, the popularity deep ecology experienced in the 1970s and 80s has slowly withered throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The reasons for this decrease in popularity likely differ, but one reason that my research has illuminated, is deep ecology's lack of practical application and the inconsistencies to be found within the theory.

The main focus of this thesis will be on the deep ecology platform, which consists of eight points functioning as normative guidelines for practical action. Moreover, as mentioned, the platform is highly significant for deep ecology and the deep ecology movement because of its gathering point for its supporters. In the first chapter a simple outline of deep ecology is presented. The discussion of deep ecology and the platform is focused in chapter two, where I present four claims illustrating why the platform is the major problem for deep ecology's practical use, as part of the solution for the climate crisis. The third chapter focuses on the

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 210-2.

⁶ U. Cubasch et al., 'Introduction', Chap. in *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, eds. T.F. Stocker et al., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, 2013.

⁷ See for example S.M. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*, UOP, USA, Reprint edition, 2013; J. Broome, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World*, W.W. Norton & Company, College edition, NY, 2014; D.G. Arnold, *The Ethics of Global Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2014, for contemporary discussions regarding the climate crisis.

apron diagram, which is a four level system depicted in an apron diagram in order to help supporters keep asking deeper questions, and how that diagram might be the most promising part of deep ecology – particularly in regards to convincing followers to support the theory practically. The deep ecology platform implies a normative approach, and hence that will be my focus throughout the paper.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In this chapter I start out in Part 1 by distinguishing between the science of ecology, so-called shallow ecology and deep ecology. This distinction will become more useful towards the end of chapter two when I argue that Naess is shallower than he admits to, and it will also be useful to keep at the back of our minds in chapter three. I then explain self-realisation and gestalt theory because they both can be seen as the core of Naess' Ecosophy T. Lastly I will present the deep ecology platform since it is the basis of this thesis, and because it also is of great importance for the practical approach of the deep ecology movement.

1. The shallow and the deep

Though this thesis is not about the science of ecology, I think it is important to start out with clarifying what the field is. Both so-called shallow ecology and deep ecology are different ways of interpreting the science of ecology, and that also makes ecology the natural place to start. Subsequently, I will describe the differences between shallow and deep ecology.

The field of ecology was formed to describe the economics of all living forms.⁸ Ecology “consists, by and large, of the construction of models of the interaction of living systems with their environment (including other living systems)”.⁹ The science of ecology is concerned with both the internal and external relationships between beings and also about what they are in themselves.¹⁰ Ecology consists of heuristics used to construct models. Moreover, “contemporary ecology consists of a patchwork of subdisciplines including population ecology, community ecology, conservation ecology, ecosystem ecology, metapopulation ecology, ... landscape ecology, ... , evolutionary ecology, functional ecology, and behavioral (as spelled in original) ecology”.¹¹ Ecology can be given many meanings, but for Naess it means “the interdisciplinary scientific study of the living conditions of organisms in interaction with each other and with the surroundings, organic as well as inorganic.”¹²

Let me move on to explain the differences between shallow and deep ecology, and their respective interpretations of the science of ecology. According to Naess, who coined both terms, the shallow ecology movement has “the health and affluence of people in the

⁸ S. Sarkar, ‘Ecology’, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, PDF version of the entry, 2014; J.B. Callicott and R. Frodeman eds., *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, Gale Cengage Learning, USA, 2009.

⁹ Sarkar, *ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, *op.cit.*, p.36.

developed countries” in mind only.¹³ Moreover, it does not include the interests of all humans, nonhuman animals or nature into its scope. If this description of shallow ecology is correct, it seems we can conclude that the field extracts data about certain human populations from the science of ecology, and leaves out the information dealing with the relationship between various life forms for example. When looking for material on shallow ecology in Naess’ books and articles, it quickly becomes evident that he does not spend much time explaining shallow ecology. Moreover, at the time of his writing Naess takes all ecological attempts to be shallow and capitalist countries in the developed world are all shallow ecology followers.

The deep ecology movement, as opposed to shallow ecology, embraces all organisms “as knots in the field of intrinsic relations”.¹⁴ One way to highlight the differences between the two approaches is by shedding a light on the technological environmentalism of shallow ecology and the ecological environmentalism of deep ecology – technocentrism versus ecocentrism.¹⁵ Naess believes in terminating the use of much of the hard technologies and rather find ways to make more use of the softer technologies.¹⁶ Technocentrism is an illustration of our excessive interference and how that leads to a loss of variety and richness of natural resources.¹⁷ Because shallow ecology embraces, and seemingly prefers, the hard technologies, it is in many ways at the very opposite end of the scale compared to deep ecology, which takes a softer and more careful approach to the environment.

With deep ecology “Naess was attempting to describe the deeper, more spiritual approach to Nature exemplified in the writings of Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson.”¹⁸ The deeper ecology was a result of openness towards us as humans and also towards all life around us. The “essence of deep ecology is to keep asking more searching questions about human life, society, and Nature as in the Western philosophical tradition of Socrates.”¹⁹ An important question for deep ecology is *why*, and the claim made by Naess and his colleagues is that this question is generally not asked by the supporters of shallow ecology. So, deep ecology takes the scientific data gathered by ecology and adds the question ‘why’ in order to understand the deeper meaning behind the relationships we find in nature.

¹³ *ibid*, p. 28.

¹⁴ *ibid*.

¹⁵ D. Rothenberg ed., ‘Introduction: Ecosophy T – from intuition to system’, in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2001.

¹⁶ Hard technology is technology beyond the plough and similar things that need to be used by people in order to function. Hence hard technology can operate without a human being present.

¹⁷ Rothenberg, *loc.cit*.

¹⁸ B. Devall and G. Sessions, ‘Deep Ecology’, in *Technology and Values*, Craig Hanks, ed., Blackwell Publishing, United Kingdom, 2010, p. 454.

¹⁹ *ibid*.

Consequently, deep ecology goes further than the factual scientific level as it deals with the human self and wisdom of the Earth. Deep ecology embraces religion and spirituality as well as philosophy, and the basis for deep ecology is the intuitions each person develops as they spend time in nature, and their ecological consciousness expand. From these intuitions and one's ecological consciousness, certain ideas are a natural consequence, such as the asking of deeper questions and embracing a more all-inclusive outlook on life. The shallow and the deep ecological positions offer different views "on pollution, use of natural resources, the human population explosion, cultural diversity and appropriate technology, land/sea use, and education and science".²⁰

The ecological field worker acquires a deep-seated respect, even veneration, for ways and forms of life. He reaches an understanding from within, a kind of understanding that others reserve for fellow men and for a narrow section of ways and forms of life. To the ecological field worker, *the equal right to live and blossom* is an intuitively clear and obvious value axiom. Its restriction to humans is an anthropocentrism with detrimental effects upon the life quality of humans themselves. This quality depends in part upon the deep pleasure and satisfaction we receive from close partnership with other forms of life. The attempt to ignore our dependence and to establish a master-slave role has contributed to the alienation of man from himself (italics in original).²¹

2. Deep ecology

Naess introduced the term 'deep ecology' in 1973 "in an article entitled 'The shallow and the deep, long-ranged ecology movement. A summary'".²² He named his ecological approach 'deep' because it asks deeper questions about the human relationship with nature and the environment. One of the first things one realises as one begins to read Naess' deep ecology, is that the thesis is based on our current disconnection with the biosphere we are part of. The second sentence in the introduction to *Ecology, community and lifestyle*, reads: "We walk around and sense an emptiness in our way of living and the course which we follow".²³ The next sentences in the introduction emphasise the second one: "Immediate, spontaneous experience tells us this: intuition. And not only intuition, but information, speaking of the dangers, comes to us daily in staggering quantities".²⁴ Hence, our intuition and our daily

²⁰ A. Naess, 'The deep ecological movement: some philosophical aspects', in R. Bhaskar, K. Georg Høyer & P. Naess eds., *Ecophilosophy in a World of Crisis*, Routledge, Canada and USA, 2012, p. 84.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

²³ Rothenberg, *loc.cit.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

encounters with the world around us, illustrate and emphasise our separation from the rest of the world and the danger that creates, namely the climate crisis.

Since Naess bases his whole theory of deep ecology on human beings' feeling of emptiness and stress, because of our current disconnection with the whole of nature, the aim of his theory is to find a solution where we can regain a feeling of connectedness with other living and non-living entities. Though there are several parts to deep ecology that are stressed throughout the book, it can all be generalised to humans rebuilding their connection and relationship with nature as a whole. Consequently, reaching a higher level of awareness is pivotal for deep ecology, as that is what will enable us to rebuild the relationship. The assumption is that, once we achieve this, everything will fall into place.

Though the theory's starting point is based on our disconnectedness with nature, Naess is optimistic and takes for granted that we will regain our sense of togetherness with the biosphere as long as we spend time in nature.²⁵ Naess provides ample information about both his views on the present disconnection between human beings and the ecosystems that surrounds us, and also about what would be the right way to view and behave towards everyone and everything we share this planet with. He acknowledges that deep ecologists need to be involved in economics and politics, both locally and globally as well as on an individual level, but self-realisation and increased awareness about our own true nature (which we have strayed from) and our togetherness with the rest of nature, has the main focus throughout *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*.²⁶

Naess saw deep ecology as a positive intuition of joy that could give hope and turn the environmental crisis around. The challenge is, however, to find ways to make it simple for people to change, and Naess thinks that his ontology, if understood completely, will yield such a positive intuition of joy that can be part of the solution for change. The positive intuitions lie in the realisation made possible by forming a relationship with every part of nature, which over time will lead to the understanding that "the vital needs of ecosystems and other species [are] our own needs: there is thus no conflict of interests".²⁷ All of nature has intrinsic value and we are all part of a greater identity that is the biosphere.

²⁵ *ibid*; Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit.

²⁶ *ibid*.

²⁷ *ibid*, p. 11.

As mentioned above, there are two features of deep ecology I wish to highlight a little more as they are of great importance for Naessian deep ecology. These are: a) self-realisation and b) gestalt theory.

a) Self-realisation is perhaps the most important concept in deep ecology. Without self-realisation people cannot come to the understanding that humans are not separate from any part of nature. Through self-realisation Naess firmly believes that we can change the way we view nature, and thus change the world. Self-realisation is so significant because “the term ... is used to indicate a kind of perfection.”²⁸ The perfection is indicated because the ultimate self-realisation involves personal combined with community self-realisation. Through self-realisation there is “an unfolding of reality as a totality.”²⁹ Consequently, self-realisation is the tool that will aid us in seeing how the world is and how we are a part of it. This is also important for the question of whether deep ecology can be part of the solution, because Naess thinks that the main cause for the environmental crisis is man’s failure to see the world for what it is.³⁰ Consequently, he believes that the solution we are searching for is discovered through self-realisation because that process enables us to see the world as it is and our place in it, and from there our ethics and morals will naturally follow.³¹ The basis is seeing how things are connected, and once this is realised, we will naturally act protectively and respectfully towards the biosphere. Through self-realisation we will come to see that humility is an important approach towards nature as a whole, and we will also realise that our current actions are not ones of humility, but arrogance and self-importance.³²

The process of self-realisation has several steps divided into six main points.³³ By following these steps we reach a stage of greater maturity where “we cannot help but identify ourselves with all living beings, beautiful or ugly, big or small, sentient or not”.³⁴ Through increased self-realisation we see ourselves in others. As a result of this process we acknowledge one of the great challenges of our day, namely saving the planet from additional environmental damage. In short, these steps suggest that we underestimate ourselves, and that we do not see ourselves for who we really are; who we really are, are beings connected with the rest of

²⁸ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, op. cit, p. 84.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ E. Gamlund, ‘Hva er galt med dypøkologien? Noen kommentarer til Arne Naess’ Økosofi T’, *Norsk Filosofisk Tidsskrift*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2012, p. 237-241.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit.

³³ A. Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, Counter Point, USA, 2010, p. 81; Drengson, A., Duvall, B. and Schroll, M.A., ‘The Deep Ecology Movement: Origins, Development, and Future Prospects (Toward a Transpersonal Ecosophy)’, *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, vol. 30, no 1-2, 2011.

³⁴ *ibid.*, *The Ecology of wisdom*, 2010, p. 84.

nature and not purely the ego-selves we think we are. It is our ego-selves that separate us from nature and from seeing the world as it is. However, because of our true nature, which we will discover through self-realisation, and when we realise this truth about ourselves, we cannot help but feel connected with the biosphere we are part of, and act accordingly. We will realise that hurting any part of nature is like hurting ourselves, and through this increased awareness we will want to make changes that allow us to live more in harmony with nature and less tuned in to capitalism and technology. We will develop what Naess calls an ‘ecological self’.³⁵ The ecological self is the opposite of our ego-self. Our ecological self is the awakened part of us who understands our connection with the natural world and chooses to live in harmony with nature and moves more or less away from modern society’s way of living.

One example Naess gives to illustrate his claim that identification with other parts of nature is discovered through the process of self-realisation, is his encounter with a dying flea when he was young.³⁶ The flea jumped from a lemming into a container with acid chemicals where it died, as there was no way to save it from the deadly chemicals. Naess claims that his empathy with the flea’s pain as it was dying, was not a basic type of empathy, but one of “a process of identification: I saw myself in the flea. If I had been alienated from the flea, not seeing intuitively anything even resembling myself, the death struggle would have left me feeling indifferent.”³⁷ Consequently, what Naess wants the process of self-realisation to achieve, is to lift our empathy with other beings from a basic to an identifying one. Because we identify with other beings we realise that less is more and modesty in one’s way of living is a natural result of one’s matured consciousness. When this shift in consciousness is achieved in enough people, we can save Earth from further ecological devastation, and hence stop violating ours and other living beings’ interests and opportunities for further self-realisation.³⁸

An important part of Naess’ self-realisation theory, is the right for every being to utilise their potential for self-realisation, and “everyone and everything ... should develop and live without interference, as all life has value and a potential in and for itself, and not just for others”.³⁹ Therefore, our own self-realisation aids other beings in their self-realisation as we are all inter-connected. Because all creatures are seen as equal (in a biotic sense), all have

³⁵ *ibid*, p. 81.

³⁶ *ibid*, p. 83.

³⁷ *ibid*, p. 84; in this example Naess claims to feel empathy with the fleas, but as I will reveal in the next chapter, he does not always feel empathetic towards various insects or mice, which is contrary to what he is claiming here. The fact that Naess acts contrary to what he claims, and the inconsistency both between theory and practice and within the thesis, will be presented in the following chapter.

³⁸ *ibid*, p. 82.

³⁹ J.S. Dryzek and D. Schlosberg eds., *Debating the Earth*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p. 341.

equal rights to self-realisation, i.e. “a right to be and to develop to their full potential” – and this includes the earth itself.⁴⁰

In order to reach a stage where we engage in self-realisation, Naess claims that we, humans, need to spend time in nature⁴¹. He further reveals that most of his works in regards to environmental philosophy are primarily intuitions that were developed through a long and close relationship with nature.⁴² Through time spent outside, in nature, we will come to realise, as Naess claims he did, that we “are not outside the rest of nature and therefore cannot do with it as we please without changing ourselves.”⁴³ We furthermore come to understand that there is no hierarchical order amongst living beings; one species is of no greater value than any of the others. The only valid reason for killing a living being is to sustain our own life and not take more than is needed. As Naess states: “You shall never use any living being only as a means.”⁴⁴ Hence, the fuel that will ignite the process of self-realisation is nature itself once we spend time in it and realise the nature of our relationship.

b) The second idea given importance in Naess’ deep ecology, is gestalt theory. It will not play a big part in this thesis, but it needs mentioning within the presentation of deep ecology, because Naess stresses it and uses it as a way of explaining our relationship with all the other parts of the environment on Earth. The idea is that gestalt theory helps us form some notion of how things are connected.⁴⁵ It is one thing to know that everything is connected; it is another to know how, and the knowing how is what gestalt theory is there to help us with. Hence, it can be seen as a foundation of information we can utilise on our journey of self-realisation.

By introducing gestalt theory into deep ecology Naess claims to “suggest a way that conceives the world neither as a mass of things nor as a mass of qualities.”⁴⁶ He compares the understanding and use of gestalt theory to several things, one example being:

⁴⁰ *ibid*; Of course here we can question how all kinds of beings and the Earth itself is supposed to engage in self-realisation. For a human being and other animals with a type of consciousness that allows for the idea of self-realisation, it makes sense in a way that it is possible. But for beings without such consciousness, the idea is rather strange because if a being is not self-aware, how can they engage in self-realisation? Though in Naess’ defence, self-realisation means the flourishing each species has potential for. Naess does not discuss this issue further, but I think it is important to at least raise the questions, as such an argument is problematic at best because of all the various angles one can approach it from. I will discuss this issue briefly in chapter two.

⁴¹ Nature for Naess means being outside forming bonds with the non-human animals we encounter and also plants etc. Every part that forms the ecosystems he embraces when he speaks of nature and the bond we have with it.

⁴² Rothenberg, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

⁴³ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, p. 174.

⁴⁵ *ibid*. p. 57; Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, 2010, *op.cit.*

⁴⁶ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, *loc.cit.*

Beethoven's Sonate Pathétique, which has three movements – Allegro, Adagio and Allegro. Many people know only the second movement. This is a genuine whole in itself, and the experience of each tone will be decisively influenced by the whole movement. But normally the experience will be different if people got to know the whole sonata. The movements are subordinate wholes, *subordinate gestalts* as part of musical reality. Within the movement there may be sets of tones forming contrasting wholes. We have therefore a complex realm of gestalts, in a vast hierarchy. We can then speak of lower-and higher-order gestalts. This terminology is more useful than speaking about wholes and holism, because it induces people to think more strenuously about the relations between wholes and parts (italics in original).⁴⁷

So, gestalts are separate, but together they make up a whole. We can focus on only one gestalt, but by doing so we will miss out on the other parts, which will leave the puzzle or the piece of music incomplete. Therefore, all the gestalts or pieces that together comprise the world ought to be experienced together, in order to see or experience the entirety of the biosphere. Thus, human beings are one gestalt and merely focusing on that one gestalt is insufficient. Similarly, with Beethoven's Sonate Pathétique, one has to listen to the entire piece in order to get a complete experience of the musical whole; listening to only one note or part of the sonata will not suffice in grasping the piece. One might think one gets adequate information by listening to one part only, but if one listens to all the parts later on, one realises one was missing out on other important parts.⁴⁸ Until we understand that humans are only one piece of the puzzle, we will not understand that we are an interconnected part of the biosphere on this planet. Deep ecology is Naess' way of helping us understand that we need to embrace the other parts as well in order to see the beauty of the puzzle we are a piece of.

This leads to Naess' point of being outside in nature: one needs to step out into nature and experience all parts in order to see the complete picture. Without being in nature we will not realise that we are merely one part of the whole that is intertwined with all the other pieces, because our focus will remain mainly on ourselves and the part that is us. Once we have reached the realisation of us simply being one part interrelated with all the other parts, we cannot go back to enjoying the one part only – all the parts of the puzzle are needed for a complete experience as one has opened one's eyes for the totality of all the parts. When this maturity and wisdom have opened our eyes and allowed us to see and experience the whole of nature, we cannot go back to immaturity and ignorance and focus on one part only.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 57-8.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 57-63.

Naess thought our ethics was based on how we view the world; he argued that it is our worldview that needs to be given attention so it can change, and not our ethics directly. A stress on ontology rather than ethics is illustrated thus: “I’m not much interested in ethics and morals, I’m interested in how we experience the world...If deep ecology is deep it must relate to our fundamental beliefs, not just to ethics. Ethics follows from how we experience the world. If you experience the world so and so then you don’t kill.”⁴⁹ If a person sees the forest as a set of trees, as opposed to as the wholes, Naess thinks it is implausible for this person to want to save the forest.⁵⁰ This is why gestalt theory has such an important role in Naess’ theory, because it allows us to see the wholes. And as he thinks we are only willing to save trees if we see the wholes as opposed to merely a set of trees, we need an understanding of gestalt theory in order to save the trees. Seeing it in this light, gestalt theory is pivotal for Naess’ deep ecology and its role in saving the environment.⁵¹

3. The deep ecology platform

Let me now take a look at the deep ecology platform. The platform is the most important aspect of deep ecology’s normative approach, and it was written as an approach to concrete environmental conflicts.⁵² Hence, the importance Naess places on political engagement for followers of deep ecology, is realised through the platform because it is aimed at being the political and ethical approach to the crisis. It does not matter from what background the followers are, or what religion they belong to, because the importance is the agreement about the eight points in the platform. Everyone who spends time in nature and thus ignites the process of self-realisation, will agree to the platform and have that as a basis for their political and ethical approach to nature.⁵³ All other aspects of deep ecology are merged in the platform which works as a centre for the theory, where all ideas and supporters come together. The platform is intended to voice the most general ideas held by the supporters so that it can function as the base for the members of the movement and the followers of the ideology.

⁴⁹ W. Fox, *Approaching Deep Ecology: a Response to Richard Sylvan’s Critique*, University of Tasmania, Centre for Environmental Studies, Hobart, 1986, p. 46.

⁵⁰ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 66.

⁵¹ However, it needs to be said that the possibility for acquiring this holistic understanding can be done without actually experiencing nature. We can simply make sense of it intellectually. Of course Naess might respond that it will not have an impact on our behavior, but that would be an assumption. Grasping an idea intellectually can in turn impact our behaviour, because right knowledge can lead to right action – at least according to Naess and his moral intellectualism. Moral intellectualism in regards to Naessian deep ecology will be discussed in chapter two.

⁵² *ibid*, p. 29.

⁵³ *ibid*, p. 28-9; Gamlund, op.cit, p. 231.

These are the eight points as developed by Naess and George Sessions, American environmentalist and good friend of Naess, in 1984⁵⁴:

- (1) The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.
- (2) Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.
- (3) Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
- (4) Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
- (5) The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.
- (6) Significant change of life conditions for the better requires change in policies. These affect the basic economic, technological, and ideological structures.
- (7) The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating *life quality* (dwelling in situations of intrinsic value) rather than adhering to a high standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
- (8) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes (italics in original).⁵⁵

One thing that needs saying before moving on to chapter two and the detailed discussion of the platform point for point, is that “deep ecology is a movement designed to encourage people to question more deeply the fundamental presuppositions underlying the dominant economic approach of Western society in term of value priorities, philosophy, and religion”.⁵⁶ Naess also “points out that deep ecology is *not a proper academic philosophy, nor an institutionalized set of ideas as found in religion or ideology*. It is better characterised as a movement among people who share certain fundamental attitudes and beliefs, support a similar lifestyle, and agree on a variety of political issues (italics added).”⁵⁷ In order to help define the deep ecological movement, Naess and Sessions presented the eight points of the deep ecology platform, as introduced above.⁵⁸ Though deep ecology was formed to have a practical approach, the deep ecology platform is based primarily on the personal intuitions of

⁵⁴ B. Devall and G. Sessions, op.cit, p. 456.; J.B. Callicott and R. Frodeman, op.cit, p. 207.

⁵⁵ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit., p. 29.

⁵⁶ Naess, ‘The deep ecological movement: some philosophical aspects’, 2012, loc.sit.

⁵⁷ *ibid*.

⁵⁸ *ibid*; Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, loc.sit.

Naess and Sessions. It remains to be seen whether it can have a practical political use, as they intended when they created it.

Conclusion

This chapter's introductory theme has illustrated that the science of ecology is the starting point for both shallow and deep ecology. Deep ecology tends to focus more holistically on all aspects of the biosphere, while shallow ecology tends more towards the human interest. The main goal for deep ecology is to spread the 'deep message' of every part of nature's interconnection with one another, and that our going back to nature is what will make this awareness come about. Spending time in nature, self-realisation and from there a change in consciousness, is the basic solution proposed by deep ecology in order to remedy the environmental crisis. The intuitions each person develops as they spend time in nature, expands their ecological consciousness. When a sufficient amount of people partake in such actions, a new level of consciousness can be realised globally. Because the intuitions and the ecological consciousness are centred in the deep ecology platform, the platform will be the red thread throughout the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Introduction

In this chapter I will make four claims and I will make use of one or more of the points of the deep ecology platform to illustrate my claims. These are: 1) there is a clear lack of coherence in deep ecology between theory and practice, and also within the theory, 2) a change in consciousness is not reliable as a solution to the global crisis, 3) the quality of life versus standard of living debate yields nothing of value because these terms and their meaning are too culture-dependent, and 4) Naess is more shallow in his approach to environmental philosophy than he claims to be. Furthermore, he has some important commonalities with philosophical pragmatism – which might be an opening for an element of deep ecology to be part of the solution. There is overlap between some of my claims, and consequently there will be some mention of one claim within the discussion of the others.

Naess was certain that the platform could in fact be of use normatively in order to remedy the environmental crisis we are facing. However, if my claims are correct, deep ecology is less suitable as an approach to solving the climate crisis than Naess himself assumed. In his book, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Naess briefly gives a few remarks to explain the points of the platform, and what the intentions were behind each point.⁵⁹ I will summarise his clarification in order to get his view of the points before I delve into the discussion of my claims.

1. A lack of coherence between theory and practice and within the theory

I will make use of the first two points of the platform to illustrate a) the lack of coherence between theory and practice. The first two points are perfect for this endeavour because they jointly support the claim that nature has intrinsic value. Moreover, this is where I believe Naess' trouble begins. I will use point eight of the platform to make clear b) the lack of coherence within the theory, because the final point to some extent contradicts one of the basic assumptions of the theory.

a) Incoherence between theory and practice. The first two points are: (1) “The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.”⁶⁰ (2) “Richness

⁵⁹ *ibid*, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, p. 29-32.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, p. 29.

and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.”⁶¹

Naess explains the first point thus: “Instead of ‘biosphere’ we might use the term ‘ecosphere’ in order to stress that we of course do not limit our concern for the life forms in a biologically narrow sense. The term ‘life’ is used here in a comprehensive non-technical way to refer also to things biologists may classify as non-living: rivers (watersheds), landscapes, cultures, ecosystems, ‘the living earth’.”⁶² Though there is no further discussion of the term ‘intrinsic value’ in the explanation to point one, this clarification of intrinsic value is given in the introduction to *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*: “We can identify with these parts in nature precisely because they are of an equal status to us; they possess a certain independence from us and our valuing”.⁶³ David Rothenberg further explains that the Norwegian word ‘egenverdi’ is what Naess has in mind when he speaks of intrinsic value.⁶⁴ Egenverdi can roughly be translated as ‘value in and for itself’, and what this means for Naess is that nature has value independent of our valuation of it – not that we cannot value nature. For readers to fully grasp his idea of nature, Naess makes the comparison between friendship and nature. Neither friends nor nature should be used only as a means because they do have value in themselves. If we treat friends or nature as mere means we are being superficial and such actions repeated over time will likely cause us to lose both.⁶⁵

The second point of the platform naturally builds on the first, as it expands on why life as such has intrinsic value. In the elaboration to point two, Naess states that:

So-called simple, lower, or primitive species of plants and animals contribute essentially to the richness and diversity of life. They have value in themselves and are not merely steps towards the so-called higher or rational life forms. The second principle presupposes that life itself, as a process over evolutionary time, implies an increase of diversity and richness ... The main point is that life on Earth may be excessively interfered with even if complete diversity is upheld.⁶⁶

The last sentence means that even if we kill numerous individuals of a certain species, and the diversity is upheld because the species is not in danger of extinction, this is not acceptable

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ Rothenberg, *op. cit.* p. 11.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*; For further discussion on intrinsic value and its possible meaning, see J. Wetlesen, ‘Value in Nature: Intrinsic or Inherent?’, in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan eds, *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., New York, 1999, p. 405-417.

⁶⁵ Rothenberg, *op.cit.* p. 11-2.

⁶⁶ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, *loc.sit.*

because each single life has intrinsic value, and "richness has to do with the maintenance of habitats and the number of individuals (size of populations)." ⁶⁷

Throughout *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, arguments are offered that ties up the explanation for points one and two. For example this simple maxim is presented: "all things hang together." ⁶⁸ All parts of nature have equal right to life and their own intrinsic value. In the same way it is generally accepted that one person has no right to harm another person or to make the other's life miserable, Naess extends that general acceptance not to harm or interfere with all living and non-living parts of nature. As each human has possibilities and rights to self-realisation, so does nature as a whole and all living creatures and non-living entities within it. ⁶⁹ This possibility arises from the intrinsic value in all things and as everything is connected, one entities' self-realisation impacts another's. According to Naess, self-realisation is pivotal for deep ecology because that is what will aid us in reaching a level of consciousness that will make us act towards nature as if it was part of our own body. An important part of Naess' self-realisation theory, is the right for every being to utilise their potential for self-realisation, and "everyone and everything ... should develop and live without interference, as all life has value and a potential in and for itself, and not just for others". ⁷⁰ Because all creatures are seen as equal (in a biotic sense), all have equal rights to self-realisation, i.e. "a right to be and to develop to their full potential" – and this includes the earth itself. ⁷¹

The idea that one beings' self-realisation impacts another's is quite radical, and Naess does not clarify why or how he thinks that all of nature goes through a process of self-realisation, or how our self-realisation impacts the self-realisation of animals and other living and non-living entities. He merely implies that the self-realisation we as individuals go through enables self-realisation in other beings and the Earth as well. ⁷² No kind of attempt to have this claim verified is made, or even a simple explanation as to why he makes this connection between human self-realisation and animals' or nature's. He merely says, as we saw in chapter one, that all beings have a right to develop to their full potential. However, does their full potential necessarily a process of self-realisation? There are many assumptions in Naess' deep ecology and this is one of them. As with the other postulates, I also have a problem with

⁶⁷ *ibid*, p. 30.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 36.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, p. 165.

⁷⁰ *ibid*.

⁷¹ *ibid*.

⁷² J.S. Dryzek and D. Schlosberg, *op.cit*, p. 341.

this one. I assume it takes a being with self-awareness to partake in a process of self-realisation. For the sake of argument, let us embrace the idea that human beings and some other types of mammals like dolphins and chimpanzees have such awareness. Therefore, we can accept that humans and some types of mammals are self-aware enough to engage in self-realisation. But can we say the same for insects, stones and plants for instance? I cannot know what type of awareness such entities have, or even if they have one at all. But because they appear not to be conscious of themselves along the line of human beings, it is hard for me to accept that my self-realisation, if I engage in it, will affect the same process in such entities. The process of self-realisation, as Naess speaks of it in regards to humans, is supposed to awaken our ecological selves. Through that process we become aware of the togetherness between us and nature. Necessarily, self-realisation must mean a transformation from some form of ignorance to a new awareness that awakens us to a different level of consciousness. Thus, also, awareness of one's own process, and one's relationship with oneself and nature, appears unquestionable in order for self-realisation to happen. A right to develop to its full potential for a plant seems to be a different matter.

Naess could say that because we are all part of the same being that is nature as a whole, one entities' self-realisation naturally affects the other parts because of the oneness. However, even if there is a sort of togetherness on some level between the various parts of nature, this does not mean that all the parts have equal awareness, and that all parts can engage in self-realisation. If we reverse the two words we get realisation self; namely realisation of one's self. Plants and other beings that are able to flourish to the extent of their potential, might still not be able to have any kind of realisation of the self – there might not even be a self to speak of. Even if some matter in me is similar to some matter in plants or rocks, this means that we share similar matter on some level; it does not necessarily mean that my process of self-realisation affects the other parts of nature, which I am a part of. Even if human beings share the building blocks, or some form of matter, with animals, plants and rocks, and we share a potential for flourishing, this does not automatically mean that other beings or other parts of nature share our ability of self-realisation. And if those parts do not share our ability for self-realisation, neither will our process of self-realisation affect the other parts. Furthermore, even if I engage in self-realisation, how is my self-realisation supposed to affect other humans or mammals' self-realisation when our individual consciousness is separate?

In ecology, it is known that various species depend on one another and that the natural systems of a habitat are intricately co-dependent⁷³. According to B.G.R. Ricaforte,

The recent Global Biodiversity Outlook [revealed that] there is a continuing decline in the three main components of biodiversity, namely: genes, species and ecosystems species, assessed for high extinction risk, which are on the average moving closer to extinction. Natural habitats in many parts of the world continue to decline in extent and integrity. Extensive fragmentation and degradation of forests, rivers and other ecosystems have also led to loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.⁷⁴

This quote supports Naess' point that the richness and diversity of all life forms contribute to the flourishing of life on Earth. If many life forms disappear, more will follow as many are interconnected and need each other for survival. This includes human beings as we too are dependent on other species and biodiversity in order to maintain life and survive⁷⁵.

A counterargument to the idea of preserving all species and life forms could of course be that some species are more valuable and more important for human beings, including our own species obviously. Many species go extinct yearly and yet we, humans, are still here, and so are numerous other species. Thus all species are not of the same importance. Biologist Michael Soulé, for example, makes such a claim.⁷⁶ He argues that the "value of a population ... depends on its generic uniqueness, its ecological position, and the number of extant populations. A large, genetically polymorphic population containing unique alleles or genetic combinations has greater value, for example, than a small, genetically depauperate population of the same species."⁷⁷

As a response to such a statement, Naess would probably argue that it would not matter if humans and other species are still around even if numerous species go extinct each year without affecting us. He would surely argue that the point is not whether we are affected or not, but that the species going extinct have a right to life and that they are as important as

⁷³ B.G.R. Ricaforte, 'An Investigation on Biodiversity Perceptions of Students Enrolled in Ecotourism at De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde', *Journal of Agricultural Science and Technology A* 2, 2012, p. 1245.; Green Facts, Facts on Health and the Environment, 2014, www.greenfacts.org (accessed 16th June 2014).

⁷⁴ Ricaforte, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ It may be that the extinction of a species outside of our community might not affect us – at least not immediately, but the "extinction of one species of a community may eventually result in the extinction of hundreds of others" (Naess 2001, p. 46). So also the preserving and saving of one species will necessarily result in the saving of hundreds of other species over time. If hundreds of species go extinct the number of species following those hundreds into extinction is vast, and therefore point two in the platform is important for the survival of life on Earth in general. One example of this used by Soulé (1985, p. 729) is the scenario of a keystone species going extinct. He argues that the extinction of major predators, or keystone species, can have massive effects and long-range consequences because it "may initiate sequences of casually linked events that ultimately lead to further extinctions" (*ibid.*).

⁷⁶ M.E. Soulé, 'What is Conservation Biology?', *BioScience*, vol. 35, no. 11, 1985, p. 730.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

humans and other species simply because they have intrinsic value separately from the value we place on them. Moreover, Naess would definitely not agree with Soulé that some species have greater value than others as he places great importance on togetherness and equal rights to life and self-realisation – and intrinsic value held by every living and non-living thing.⁷⁸

However, as we go deeper into Naess' various works, the cracks in his theory start appearing. After a while it is revealed that no matter how insistently Naess claims to be ecocentric and give all species equal worth, he does falter in the execution of his own theory. For example, Naess claims that it feels natural for him to care for certain species of butterflies, but not for various other species of insects.⁷⁹ The butterflies and the insects do not belong in the environment Naess finds them; the wind has blown them there. When they land, they often land on the snow, and if no one is there to rescue them, they will slowly die freezing to death on the cold surface. However, some butterflies, and other types of insects once in a while, are lucky since Naess feels intuitively that he ought to save them. Those he does not feel like saving, die a slow death on the snow.⁸⁰ The only explanation Naess gives is that it intuitively feels right to save the butterflies but not the other insects. The only assertion this type of answer yields, is the proclamation that people's intuitions with regard to nature differ and therefore are not reliable as grounds for making moral judgments about environmental protection.

Another statement that further illustrates his incoherence, is his saying that there is an obvious difference in obligation to various forms of life. He admits that his obligation to human life is far greater than his obligation to other animals.⁸¹ For Naess this statement is defensible because his greater obligation to human beings does not arrive from an opinion that humans are better or smarter or more valuable; it simply is so because he is a human being too, and he says that it is natural for a species to feel a greater sense of obligation toward one's own than toward others.⁸²

However, Naess' defense does not suffice. He claims that all living and non-living things have intrinsic value, are equal in a biotic sense and hence are ends in themselves and not mere means. Yet, Naess feels a greater obligation towards a being of his own species. The only

⁷⁸ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit.

⁷⁹ A. Naess, 'An Answer to W.C. French: Ranking, Yes, But the Inherent Value is the Same', in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan eds, *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., New York, 1999, p. 147.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 147-8.

⁸² *ibid.*

explanation he gives is that it feels more natural. This makes for poor clarification, if it can even be called thus, and it certainly emphasises my first claim. Because ‘it feels more natural’, is this supposed to imply that such a statement makes it justifiable? If so, one can use that statement for all sorts of unethical behaviour, and simply justify it with saying that it felt natural. For a philosopher of the magnitude of Naess, such an unphilosophical statement is quite shocking.

Furthermore, Naess illustrates what Peter Singer calls ‘speciesism’.⁸³ Speciesism is a term coined by Singer to illustrate “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interest of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species.”⁸⁴ Of course Naess could make a counterargument saying that what he and deep ecology is all about, is the intrinsic value present in all beings, and the togetherness that everything share. However, he counters himself by stating that his intuition tells him to save some species and not others. Moreover, Naess acknowledging that he feels a greater obligation towards humans than members of other species also pushes him towards speciesism. Simply arguing that feeling more obligated towards another being of one’s own species does not equal members of other species lacking (intrinsic) value, is simply unsatisfactory. If they have value along the lines of human beings, why feel more obligated toward another human than toward any other type of being? If other beings truly have the same intrinsic value as we do, then why is our life more valuable than theirs in regards to vital needs for example? Then why not choose to die in order to save them?

It seems the only way for Naess to avoid speciesism, is through arguing that the morally relevant property is not species membership, but rather certain cognitive or emotional capacities, which would favour saving a person over a member of another species. However, as Naess does not seem to want to embrace this type of argument, it is not certain he would embrace this possible egress from speciesism.

Naess allows his intuition and his feelings to guide him and to tell him who is worth saving or not. In doing so, he appears to temporarily forget that we are all connected, living and non-living, and that all kinds of insects and beings are an extension of his body. This forgetfulness in Naess’ practical execution of his own arguments, illustrates that his thesis might just be a little too idealistic since it is too challenging to live up to in daily life. Additionally, this lack of follow-through illustrates that the theory itself is flawed. Naess’ practical approach, taking

⁸³ P. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Harper Collins Publisher, New York, 2009, p. 6.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

feelings and intuitions⁸⁵ as grounds for arguments, is the beginning of the end for deep ecology. Feelings and intuitions are too unreliable and are bound to differ, and thus makes for a poor basis for a thesis. Also, Naess appears to use intuition as synonymous with feeling, which is not common in current moral and political philosophical debate. Seemingly Naess' use of intuition has no cognitive or rational component like it has in current discussions.

William C. French, an environmental ethicist and professor of theology, has criticised the inconsistencies within Naess' deep ecology. His critique further highlights Naess' idealism and lack of practicality. The two arguments of French's that correspond with my criticism are the ones I will mention here: a) there is a gap between theory and practice, and often when morally problematic and tangible cases between human rights and that of members of other species, the interest of humans are ranked as more important as our vital needs are viewed as superior to that of the member of the other species.⁸⁶ b) Naess does not clarify why human needs are above that of other species' and gives no moral basis for this.⁸⁷

In regards to point a) there is clearly an inconsistency and ambiguity in Naess' account, and French argues that "... deep ecologists ... appear to toss species ranking out the front door of their argument only to have it sneak around and into the house from the back."⁸⁸ The inconsistency and ambiguity arises because a biospherical egalitarian approach to ethics is utopian and not feasible in practice. This is shown for example in Naess' inconsistent behaviour towards various types of insects for instance, which was illustrated above.

Point b) is a problem because Naess offers little or no clarification of why human needs trump those of other animals. As mentioned above, there is a problem with simply stating that something is natural. Natural for who? A human; who is that supposed to entail? Every human or just Naess? His assumptions and lack of clarification keeps exemplifying the lack of coherence between theory and practice and within the theory, because it comes across as a poor excuse for not executing the thesis' starting point. In addition, Naess also argues that these moral dilemmas are difficult to explain because one follows one's intuition.⁸⁹ Although one's intuition might be a valid guide in some cases, it may not be the best director in

⁸⁵ Naess does not explain clearly what he means by 'intuition', but D. Rothenberg's Introduction to *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* has good information about how Naess works with intuition.

⁸⁶ W.C. French, 'Against Biospherical Egalitarianism', in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan eds., *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., New York, 1999, p. 127-8.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 130-1.

⁸⁸ *ibid*, p. 128.

⁸⁹ Naess, 'An Answer to W.C. French: Ranking, Yes, But the Inherent Value is the Same', 1999, *op.cit*, p. 147-8.

philosophical matters, as it is often complicated to explain with words because intuition deals with feelings and not rational thought. Naess' idea of intuition is linked with emotions and one's emotional choices rather than that of rationality.⁹⁰ When a view is linked with one's emotions it seems to be implicit for Naess that no rational explanation is needed. In this sense Naess' use of intuition differs from most of the contemporary philosophers. Philip Stratton-Lake argues that "[all] of the classic intuitionists maintained that basic moral propositions are self-evident—that is, evident in and of themselves—and so can be known without the need of any argument."⁹¹ Stratton-Lake distinguishes between two types of intuitions, viz. intuition from argumentation and from immediate consciousness or feeling. Intuition from immediate consciousness or feeling "is the mind's awareness of its own existence and mental states."⁹² Clearly, this correlates with Naess' use of intuition, but as we see there is another way to view the term. And the first use of intuition is more common in contemporary discussions.

This is also why Naess finds himself in trouble when he wants to explain and defend himself against French. For example in the case of saving some insects but not others, Naess merely argues that: "It feels natural for me to take special care of certain species of butterflies ... Specimens of other families of insects do not get careful treatment; they are mostly ignored. In some cases I find my behaviour ethically not quite as it should be, in other cases I don't feel that in spite of the obvious practical possibility of being helpful."⁹³ Though this example deals with insects, and many people find them insignificant and would not care if thousands died, the point is that in Naess' theory there appears to be no such inconsistency. But in practice there certainly is. In the case of animals, however, Naess admits that it can be challenging to justify killing on any account, even if it still is something that we cannot avoid in practice.⁹⁴ Due to the fact that killing cannot be avoided, Naess adds 'in principle' in order to allow humans to kill to survive. Beyond taking what we need to survive, though, killing, damaging and interfering is not accepted. It is clear that Naess does not need to let the insects die in order to survive, and he could easily have saved them, or at least attempted to, but he stands by and lets them die. The problem French has with this argument is that it gives no moral grounding as to why this is so – neither in the case of insects nor animals. It is merely stated, but not clarified or argued properly for.⁹⁵ It is possible to exonerate Naess by stating

⁹⁰ Rothenberg, op.cit, p. 14.

⁹¹ P. Stratton-Lake, 'Intuitionism in Ethics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, PDF version of the entry, The Metaphysics Research Lab Center for the Study of Language and Information Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 2014, p. 2.

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ Naess, 'An Answer to W.C. French: Ranking, Yes, But the Inherent Value is the Same', 1999, op.cit, p. 147.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁵ French, op.cit, p. 132.

that we do not have any positive duties towards helping insects or preventing them from dying, a notion many would agree with, but the incoherence between practice and theory remains a problem, because it contradicts Naess' own arguments about inherent value and togetherness.

In his response to French, Naess argues that his position can be summed up thus: "Living beings have in common a same sort of value, namely inherent value."⁹⁶ However, he confesses that he prefers to use the term 'value in themselves' as defining value with words such as 'inherent' or 'intrinsic', "disturbs the cloud."⁹⁷ By this Naess means that the term 'value in themselves' is open to various interpretations while inherent or intrinsic are not open to interpretations in the same way because the "delicate cloud of different interpretations"⁹⁸ is lacking.⁹⁹ The term 'value in themselves' rather than 'intrinsic value' is meant to imply that it is sensible for beings to do things strictly for their own sake, and to make clear the distinction between mere instrumental value and that of intrinsic value as seen in points one and two of the deep ecology platform. Naess insists that a mouse and a man can have the same value even if we choose to save one and not the other, or if we feel a stronger duty to help the man and not the mouse because of our greater obligation to the human.¹⁰⁰ Such an act would not decrease the value of the mouse, but would rather be an illustration of our obligation to a person of our own species.

It is evident that Naess does not manage to follow his own argument stating that it is not enough to express our love for nature theoretically; the love has to be expressed as love in action. Naess is acting against his own arguments of everything being interconnected and having the same intrinsic value. Once again, he elucidates that deep ecology is flawed as it is too difficult to perform in action. If all living and non-living entities truly are the same and we feel the oneness, then there is no difference in the feeling we have towards man or mice, because then there is no difference between man and mice. The togetherness between all beings and every part of nature ought to necessarily mean that there is no difference between for example man and mice, or various types of insects. Naess himself expresses it thus: "We are a part of the ecosphere just as intimately as we are part our own society."¹⁰¹ He further

⁹⁶ Naess, 'An Answer to W.C. French: Ranking, Yes, But the Inherent Value is the Same', 1999, op.cit, p. 146.

⁹⁷ A. Naess, 'Response to Jon Wetlesen', in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan eds., *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., New York, 1999, p. 418.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Perhaps this is why he does not explain his use of the term 'intrinsic value' any further in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, though he does use the term quite frequently throughout the book.

¹⁰⁰ French, op.cit, p. 148.

¹⁰¹ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, op.cit, 2001, p. 165.

claims that a person can want well-being for plants and animals just as naturally as that person would want well-being for themselves or for another human being.¹⁰² Therefore I would have no greater obligation towards myself or any part of the society I live in, than towards other parts of nature, such as animals or plants. Whether we call it intrinsic value or value in themselves, does not matter. That is a mere rearranging of words that Naess appears to do in order to make excuses for himself when he cannot follow through with love in action following his own thesis. Obviously, most beings do things strictly for their own sake, humans included, and that is not the problem I have with Naess' statement. The problem is that he seems to make that claim only when he needs to defend himself from his own contradictions. He adamantly claims to be ecocentric and give all beings intrinsic value, but in the end he appears to be as anthropocentric as the rest of us, as he chooses to save a butterfly and help a man, while leaving some insects to die and a mouse out in the cold to defend itself from certain death.

Naess' statement, that it is natural for humans to put the needs of human beings before that of other species because we belong to the human species and not some other species, makes sense to some degree. I assume it is natural for any species to feel a closer connection to another specimen of the same species. Most will feel a sense of belonging due to an understanding of what it means to be of that particular species and so on. There is an evident common ground between two individuals of the same species. Most of us will also put our own needs before that of another being, and thus it is fine to kill to satisfy our vital needs seen from that perspective. But, one cannot argue for species egalitarianism in theory in order to go against it in practice supported merely by a feeling. Therefore, what makes no sense is the lack of coherence between theory and practice. Naess' lack of proper argumentation reflects poorly on his theory as a whole as his ideals are obviously too high. Thus, it also seems that though he in theory disagrees with Soulé, in practice he evidently agrees; not all species are equally important.

Naess wants deep ecology to be a movement, a practical movement that seeks out to change the way people view nature and thus how they behave towards it. But when there is such a huge gap between his own theory and practice, it is problematic for the movement to accomplish what he aims at, namely a greater range of support for the practical application of the theory. How are supporters supposed to trust deep ecology to help them change their attitudes and ideas about nature, and their relationship with it, if the creator of the thesis is

¹⁰² *ibid.*, p. 168.

unable to follow the ideals of the theory in his own practical relationship with nature? Trust in a thesis arrives when the theory's main points are well argued for and when there are no inconsistencies. Naess does not manage this, and therefore his deep ecology is challenging to trust. Subsequently, it is also difficult to see how deep ecology can be useful in changing people's views toward animals and the environment, when the core values of the theory are too idealistic and demanding. I suppose if a person is already convinced, he or she might overlook the gaps, but for those who still need convincing, it is more likely that they will support deep ecology's opposing forces, such as shallow ecology because of its more pragmatic and human-friendly content.

b) Incoherence within the theory. Let me move on to the discussion of incoherence within the theory using point eight of the platform. Point 8 states: (8) "Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an *obligation directly or indirectly* to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes (italics in original)."¹⁰³ For explanation to point 8 Naess admits that though there are differences of opinion as to what is important, where we start and where we go next in regards to the crisis, this should not exclude cooperation and action.¹⁰⁴ For the deep ecology movement he hopes that it is easier located among many other movements and that a cooperation between the deep ecology movement and other movements, may be factual as opposed to the deep ecology movement isolating itself. Naess lastly argues that the eighth point might make it easier for followers of the deep ecology movement to be clear about where they stand and to be more certain about "which disagreements might profitably be reduced and which ones might profitably be sharpened."¹⁰⁵

Point 8 might be interpreted to deal with more practical changes since it states that those who support the platform have direct or indirect obligation to participate in any attempt to implement the necessary changes. The problem though, is that there is no mention in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* of how this change is to come about. For example, there is only one hint as to what type of society Naess envisions in his ideological world, where everyone is conscious of the oneness we experience with the rest of the biosphere. He argues that the "maxim 'live and let live' suggests a class-free society in the entire ecosphere, a democracy in which we can speak about justice, not only with regard to human beings, but also for animals, plants and landscapes."¹⁰⁶ Naess extrapolates further on this thought as he claims that the

¹⁰³ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, loc.cit.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 173.

ecosophical outlook on life comes about from an identification with nature that is so deep that we as individuals are no longer limited by our own egos. We then see ourselves as an intricate part of all life, we adopt the guidelines that are the platform.¹⁰⁷ However, there is no further explanation or suggestions as to how Naess imagines this to come to life, and though this lack of explanation is no inconsistency, it is surely an insufficiency.

Further issues with point 8 is that obligation is suddenly brought into the picture when Naess throughout *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* argues that obligation and ethics has no part in the discussion, because when people fully grasp the ontology he is presenting, the necessary ethics and morals will follow, and we will act accordingly.¹⁰⁸ Point 8 clearly speaks about duty or obligation, and this seems to undermine Naess' thesis that when you embrace his theory, certain practices will follow from your new insights. If there is an obligation to directly or indirectly participate in implementing the necessary changes, does that not make the theory redundant? He speaks of those who subscribe to the first seven points of the deep ecology platform, but if they condone points one to seven, will they not automatically act in favour of nature as they have embraced the ontology? If they fully subscribe to the points in question, their awareness must be similar to Naess' and their consciousness is unlike the one of the masses, and thus no need to remind them of their obligation ought to be required.

Point 8 of the platform neatly underlines the fact that there is a clear lack of coherence within Naess' theory. On the one hand there is the assumption that self-realisation and change in consciousness are all that is needed for the change in action to happen. On the other there is the obligation to participate and make sure the necessary changes happen. With the last point in the platform, Naess shoots himself in the foot. If one agrees with Naess' thesis and one follows his ontology, there is surely no need to remind the supporters of what they have to do. It is like saying that Naess needs to remind himself of what his duties are, though he does not believe in duty, just in case he should forget what is needed in order to remedy the crisis. Consequently, speaking of obligation is redundant. Naess does not believe obligation and ethics have a place in deep ecology, yet he sums up the platform reminding supporters of their duty. This illustrates a lack of trust in his own assumptions that is hard to move past.

Moreover, Naessian deep ecology illustrates its dualism as it fails to properly acknowledge

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, p. 174.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*; it could be argued in Naess' defence that the first edition of *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* was written before the deep ecology platform saw the light of day. However, there are several editions of the book after the platform was written and therefore that defence only works for the editions published before 1984 when the platform was formed.

that human needs ought to at least be a part of the discussion along the lines of animals and nature. We are after all part of the biosphere; we are not outside of it. Therefore, we deserve the same consideration as the rest of nature. Naess speaks of oneness, but still shows clear signs of dualism. He wants us to realise our connection and the oneness, but on the other hand he places us outside of nature because we are the bad guys that destroy everything else. Because of our destructive nature, we do not deserve to prosper, but ought to step away from the path we are on and go several centuries back in time; human beings do not matter compared with the 'pure' parts; i.e. animals and nature in general. If we truly are equal do not also people deserve to live the life that feels natural to them?

2. A change in consciousness is not a reliable solution to the environmental crisis

The points I will make use of for this claim, are 3 and 4 because they state that we have no right to reduce the richness of the planet. The points are: (3) "Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs."¹⁰⁹ (4) "Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening."¹¹⁰

As the explanation by Naess to point three reveals, the point can serve as a guideline regarding what barriers human rights ought not to cross, rather than always arguing for what to do.¹¹¹ What is within our rights is the same as the rights of all other living beings; we have a right to satisfy our vital needs, but nothing beyond that. Naess admits that the term 'vital need' is vague and challenging to properly clarify, because there are so many different factors at play. Vital needs are not merely about killing one animal if one is hungry, but it can also for example be about livelihood. If reducing the richness and diversity is the only way for a person to have income and support his/her family, it is accepted to go beyond vital needs. For instance, Inuits hunting seals in Greenland or whalers in Japan whose only way of making a living and continuing tradition is by killing the seals and whales. If an individual lives in a rich country with other opportunities, Naess does not support taking more than satisfying vital needs for food, however, even to make a living or uphold tradition, as vital needs can be satisfied through other means. But if there are no other options, it means supporting a vital

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

need, and hence acceptable.¹¹² However, the lines in this matter are grey at best, because the concept of vital needs is largely context dependent.

Because all things are interconnected we have no right to decrease the value of things, or reduce the richness and diversity and take more than to satisfy our vital needs. For Naess the environment is not ours to utilise as we please; all parts of it are equal to us and has its own right to flourish. However, one can be concerned about the biodiversity while not adopting the idea of intrinsic value for all part of the biosphere. Nevertheless, it is not enough for Naess to express our love for nature in theory; the love has to be expressed as love in action, as discussed earlier.¹¹³ Once love in action is achieved, priorities can be made that support the biosphere's richness and diversity, and we can create policies which support our priorities and allow us to take only what we need. For Naess, this is closely linked with values and norms and he thinks that "environmentalists should have training in the explicit voicing of values and norms. Formulate strong, clear expressions of values and norms which the opponent cannot neglect!"¹¹⁴ For this to be actualised a mere outbreak of emotion in regards to the environment will not suffice and therefore real love in action is needed.

Since we are not outside of the biosphere, but in fact part of it, as it is part of us, we are not within our right to take whatever we please. Though we are one with everything else, it is not in our right to take more than we need, and every action we perform is affecting us either positively or negatively and will change us.¹¹⁵ A change in consciousness is what Naess thinks will enable us to see that we are interfering too much and that our interference is reducing the richness and diversity to the extreme. Self-realisation is the tool that enables the change in consciousness.

In regards to clarification to point 4 of the platform, Naess argues that individuals "in the richest countries cannot be expected to reduce their excessive interference with the non-human world to a moderate level overnight." He also recognises that some modifications done by humans are to be expected since it is as natural for us to make small changes to the environment as it is for other species. The issue is the extent at which humans are modifying the planet, and we ought to maintain our fight to preserve whatever wilderness is left because

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 64

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 165.

such areas are not big enough to support the ecological functions of the area or for game preservation within the wilderness area.¹¹⁶

Naess and many environmentalists and environmental philosophers seem to agree that humans are interfering too much and that we need to reverse and remedy the situation quickly before it is too late. Naess argues that “the ideology of ownership of nature has no place in an ecosophy.”¹¹⁷ He further claims that the more we understand our togetherness with other beings, the more care we will take and the more aware and with care we will treat this planet, and we will interfere less. Because of our ignorance of the togetherness between ourselves and other species, the consequences of our ill-informed actions are far greater than initially assumed, and due to this we have to act now before it is too late.¹¹⁸ A change in consciousness will be able to set us on the right course.

The general feel of Naess’ thesis is that we humans ought to step away from our God-like role and find our way back to oneness and togetherness with all living beings and nature itself. Find joy in simple things like being in nature as opposed to wanting a bigger house or the latest mobile phone. A simple life as that lived in eco-villages where people live in harmony with nature to a greater extent than our modern society generally permits. Naess thinks that we underestimate ourselves because we think we need more than to satisfy our vital and basic needs. He thinks we will realise, through self-realisation and a new level of consciousness, that we can be happy with less and that by regaining our feeling of oneness with nature, we will acknowledge that we can live in harmony with the entire ecosystem that is the Earth. We will thus not crave all the things we crave today, and we will therefore cease the destruction of our home – the planet we inhabit. In concordance with this, Naess argues that: “Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment.”¹¹⁹

After having read *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* one is left with a feeling resembling a kind of Hobbesian pessimism towards people due to the complete lack of faith in human beings in their current state. The only solution to the global crisis is the enormous change we are told we have to undergo in order to solve anything of substance and become good enough

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 175.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

persons. Though Naess presents solutions such as change in policy and our economic structure, nothing will yield results unless a change in consciousness is realised. Hence, his whole thesis rests on that change.

There are three problems with this idea, and I will present them one by one: (a) We do not have time to wait while a new consciousness is realised by enough people. b) Even if a change in consciousness is realised, this does not automatically mean that people will act towards other living beings and nature as Naess automatically thinks they will. This is the claim about moral intellectualism that I will develop further later on. (c) A change in consciousness might not occur at all.

Point (a) we do not have time to wait while a new consciousness is realised by enough people, is an evident challenge that makes it difficult to wholeheartedly embrace Naess' solution of a change in consciousness. The reason is that we have to act now and we cannot wait for enough individuals to reach a different level of consciousness.¹²⁰ It somehow feels like unreservedly embracing an idea I might have of what I would do if I won a billion pounds. Sure, I can dream and make plans, but I would never base my everyday life on the idea of having all that money, and what I would or could do with it. Yet somehow, this is what Naess is supposedly doing; he is basing his whole theory on a hope that may or may not happen sometime in the future. Though he appears to be certain that a change in consciousness will become a reality at some point, history tells us otherwise. Humans have changed in many ways since the dawn of man, but not all that much in terms of compassion for others, human and nonhuman, showing humility towards nature and not exploiting what we can with the tools we have. Never before has the human race exploited so much of the Earth as we are currently doing, and this is simply because we now have the technology to do so. For most individuals this is progress, and then asking the majority of people to take what would feel like several steps back into some dark age, is comparable to asking someone to live now as if they had a billion pounds when they do not – and have no idea of they will ever realise the dream.

We cannot live today merely on the hopes of what tomorrow might bring; we also have to make decisions based on where we are today and what assets we have right now. Tomorrow will certainly come, but it may not come in the form we hoped, and it might not bring with it what we had hoped for. Having hopes, dreams and aspirations is of importance, but it is

¹²⁰ Cubasch et al, loc.cit.

utopian to base one's entire life on those same hopes, dreams and aspirations. The situation unfolding itself on this planet in this very moment, is one where most are not willing to give up their standard of living in exchange for what Naess deems quality of life. This is the truth that we have to start working from when we attempt to find solutions for the environmental crisis. One can be optimistic about changing people's attitudes towards the environment and the climate crisis, but a change in consciousness is too unconvincing.

As an opposing argument Naess could surely state that with the aid of self-realisation, we could ensure that the future will be as we wish it to be. And by spreading the idea of self-realisation through the deep ecology movement, enough people might be reached and thus it would take more time than we have – in order to remedy the climate crisis. Naess could also argue that he himself is an example of another level of consciousness being plausible because he embraced it. Furthermore, he might argue that if a change in consciousness is realizable not too far into the future, deep ecology offers sufficient solutions through the platform that will enable us to act also while we 'wait' for enough people to change.

But, first of all, how can we rely on self-realisation and that enough people will embrace the idea? For more than two thousand years the philosophy of Siddharta Gautama has been available to us, and not many (compared to how many we are on this planet) have embraced his idea of enlightenment. In some ways enlightenment, as taught by the Buddha, can be likened to Naess' idea of self-realisation. However, most people appear not to be interested in embracing either philosophies, whether spread by the deep ecology movement or by H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama. Many do embrace these ideas, but not enough. Surely, Naess himself is a good example of someone who has taken on board the ideas of Buddhism and deep ecology, but even he cannot follow through as we saw in point 1 above. Consequently, it is easy to draw the conclusion that for most of us, it simply is too improbable to take such ideas seriously. Though deep ecology offers some solutions that might be implementable now, they are too heavily intertwined with the idea of self-realisation and a change in consciousness for them to be taken too seriously as deep ecology now stands.

Naess places great importance on political action and policymaking and he argues that the deep ecology movement and ecological movements in general cannot evade political engagement.¹²¹ I agree with this, but on the other hand, it seems futile to base political action and policymaking on hopes and dreams without having some sense of how things actually are

¹²¹ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit., p. 130-46.

at the moment. If we were to take political action based on a level of consciousness that is not realized, it is plausible to think that not much would get done as people would not follow or even might not understand. We cannot hope to act from a place we have yet to reach. Politics, perhaps more than anything, has to deal with status quo and slowly aim at working toward the desired goal.¹²²

(b) A change in consciousness does not guarantee a change in action. Naess takes it for granted that when a change in consciousness is realized, everyone will feel a connection with nature and treat it as it was part of our own bodies.¹²³ However, as shown above, this necessary link between theory and action that Naess envisions, is not even realised by himself as we saw above. Not only because action is more difficult than theory, as seen in Naess' case, but also because most people do not embrace the theory Naess passionately advocates.

In Naess' own words, the "change of consciousness [...] of a transition to a more egalitarian attitude to life and the unfolding of life on Earth"¹²⁴ is the way forward. However, this is Naess' assumption, but it does not necessarily follow that it would actually be as he envisions, even if enough people experienced a change in consciousness. Though Naess fails in his own love in action some times, this does not mean that he fails at all times, and his consciousness towards nature is likely unlike that of most people. If the majority came to think and act like Naess, it is credible to conclude that more nature would be left untouched. However, it is uncertain whether most people would act and think as Naess even if they did have a sort of awakening. It is also possible to spend hours on end in nature without becoming ecocentric and/or see nature in a more spiritual light. Timber workers for example, spend hours on end in the forest, but they see the forest as a kind of store where they can get their timber. Most of them probably have great respect for nature, but that does not necessarily mean that they will want to leave the trees and not utilise them for building houses for instance. Spending time in

¹²² This is confirmed by Jan Bojer Vindheim, a politician who has been active on the Norwegian political scene for several decades in the party Miljøpartiet De Grønne (roughly translated The Environmental Party The Greens). I had a meeting with Vindheim on November 3rd 2014 in order to investigate the relationship between Naess' theories and the day-to-day politics of the party. One of MDG's (Miljøpartiet De Grønne) greatest inspirations is Naess (also one of the founders of the party) and his ecophilosophy, and Naess was an honorary member since the party was founded in 1988 until his death in 2009. What I wanted to discuss with Vindheim was how much Naess' ecophilosophy affected the party's politics in general in order to determine how politically plausible Naess' thesis is. Vindheim knew Naess well and he reveals that Naess rose above politics – practical politics. He performed the odd activist action, but never engaged in real politics as that would be too practical. As for the party's politics today, they do not keep the focus on deep ecology because of its lack of practical implication. According to Vindheim politics is the path of compromises and all one can do is try not to stray too far from one's ideology. One has to accept that things move slowly and that one can only achieve little bits at a time. They do not lose sight of their goal, but they need to be pragmatic and embrace the tiny steps they are able to take along the path of compromise leading to, hopefully, the future they want to realise. Consequently, it seems that for MDG Naess' thesis helped shape their ideas, but in the every-day political decisions, deep ecology plays no vital part. See the reference to MDG in the bibliography for further information.

¹²³ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 89-96.

¹²⁴ *ibid*, p. 91.

nature does not necessarily lead to the same result for all the individuals. Hence, we cannot simply assume that everyone who spends much time outdoors will come to the same conclusions as Naess does. Consequently, deep ecology makes a great error relying on a change in consciousness to be part of the solution to the global crisis.

Having the ideals seem good for end goals, but perhaps dividing the end goal into smaller bits that are a little more fathomable for the general individual might be a good idea. And in regards to Naess, I think he would have benefitted from smaller and more approachable goals, because it would have made deep ecology more applicable as it would have been more practical and tangible for the average person. Going from being an average person to transforming oneself into a self-realised person of perfection who lives in togetherness with nature, might be a little daunting unless there are stages one can go through that makes it appear more reachable. That is, if one has any interest in starting the process at all. If not, any amount of smaller goals might not do the trick.

Furthermore, in our western society today, most people spend the majority of their time indoors or within the limits of cities, and not in nature (this is a prerequisite for change in deep ecology as we saw earlier). At the most some people spend the occasional hour in a park located within the city borders or by a river running through it. How we are supposed to get people to spend time in nature is not discussed in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*. And frankly, it does not seem plausible to pass laws and create policies that force persons to spend a certain amount of their time in nature each day or each week. It is difficult to even imagine a sort of government who would spend time on such issues. Perhaps Naess envisions, along the lines with his ideal ecophilosopher, that society will be like the utopian civilization depicted in William Morris' novel *News from Nowhere*.¹²⁵ In this utopian story there is no more democracy, money or any difference in status between anyone. It is a true egalitarian society where everyone has their tasks and everything is shared among everyone. In the novel this change comes about after a major disaster in the world that destroys nearly everything and everyone. The remaining people build a new and better society.¹²⁶ Whether such a society is possible at all is difficult to say, but I think we can conclude that it is not possible currently.

Naess places tremendous faith in the deep ecological movement, and that a sufficient amount of supporters with an ecocentric worldview will be part of it. From the 2007 IPCC report to the 2013 report they (scientists) found things to have become worryingly more severe during

¹²⁵ W. Morris, *News from Nowhere*, Project Gutenberg Etexts, UK, 2002.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

those six years than was expected.¹²⁷ Since the situation keeps worsening at such a rate, we do not have time to allow sub-organisations of deep ecology to spread the information in order for enough people to change their view of nature. As we know, for Naess a change in consciousness is essential, and he claims that without a “change in consciousness, the ecological movement is experienced as a never-ending list of reminders.”¹²⁸ The apparent lack of consciousness a la Naess, is plausibly part of the reason why deep ecology in some ways do come across as a never-ending list of reminders.

(c) A change in consciousness might not occur at all. This is a problem because if an entire theory relies on a change in consciousness to happen, then what if that change does not take place? It seems in that case the thesis will crumble and fall to the ground. With the assumption that a change in consciousness will take place in a foreseeable future, Naess supposes that when that change has occurred, everyone will ‘awaken’ and experience togetherness with nature. However, this is quite unlikely. The way in which people view and thus act towards nature, have generally been divided into four types: stewardship, imperialism, romanticism and utilitarianism.¹²⁹ Those who see themselves as stewards of nature generally hold a perspective of human privilege in the hierarchy of nature. It is our responsibility to take care of nature as the stewards of the Earth. The imperialist view is a view much like the stewardship, but they have a stronger connection with the Christian and Jewish traditions for human superiority on this planet. Human beings have a God-given right to control all living beings and ecosystems as we please, because we are at the top. Though a romantic might view nature in an anthropocentric way like the stewards and imperialists, they see nature as most beautiful in its untouched, pure state. The final view, the utilitarian, regards the most important thing in life to be happiness.¹³⁰

Naess is clearly a romantic in regards to nature and his relationship with it. And he appears to assume that everyone will wake up with a romantic view towards nature when they have gone

¹²⁷ Cubash et.al, loc.sit.

¹²⁸ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, loc.cit.

¹²⁹ Ricaforte, op.cit, p. 1250.

¹³⁰ Ricaforte, *ibid*; An unofficial survey performed by Ricaforte among his students, showed that fifty percent of the participants thought that humans are special and ought to be placed at the top of the biosphere, i.e. a utilitarian perspective. Thirty percent answered that humans are similar to the primates and should be classed among them, and the final twenty percent saw human beings as the stewards of nature. Though this was just a little survey, Ricaforte is not surprised by the results because they mirror the development this planet has seen for the past millennia. We have and we still live in a human-centered world (see Ricaforte p. 1249 for more information about this survey) What this unofficial test might illustrate is that a change in consciousness might never happen. The youth of today seems to follow in the footsteps of their anthropocentric forefathers. For a change in consciousness to be realised, one first has to accept the idea of self-realisation and the importance of spending time in nature as Naess decrees. If one does not embrace these ideas, there will likely be no change in consciousness. And if the results seen by Ricaforte’s survey are speaking for the general population, then it is plausible to conclude that a change in consciousness on a massive scale will not happen.

through their awakening change in consciousness. By maintaining that the solution is a change in consciousness, deep ecology removes itself from being part of the solution to the crisis. What we need is proposed resolutions we can make use of today, and not something that might occur if the change in consciousness happens to take place. Naess argues that currently, humans are too anthropocentric and need to go through a change in consciousness that will take us from a human-centred focus to a nature-centred focus. He argues that changes in the system of our way of life are futile without the change in consciousness, and therefore that has to be taken seriously. We do need direct action in the form appeals, humanitarianism and information in addition, but without a change in consciousness Naess does not think sufficient change can be made in order to rectify the crisis.¹³¹ Thus, short-term goals are useful only when a change in consciousness is taken into consideration and worked towards through self-realisation.

If we leave the idea that short-term goals can be useful only when a change in consciousness is taken into consideration, a two-tiered approach to the climate crisis could be something Naess can condone. It is plausible to think that Naess would accept working towards short-term goals such as changing policies, while keeping the long-term goal of a change in consciousness at the back of our minds. Because the two strategies do not exclude each other, it might be a good argument for Naess' defense. Of course whether a change in consciousness is a good enough long-term goal with satisfactory propositions for a solution, is debatable.

A perhaps unlikely, but still very intriguing comparison that ties in with the argument of a change in consciousness, is that of Naess and Plato. There are quite a few interesting similarities that can be drawn between Naess' deep ecology and Platonic idealism, but the most interesting one is their moral intellectualism. Moral intellectualism is the idea that right knowledge yields right action. I will briefly present Plato's doctrine of ideas and then explain how that correlates with Naess' thesis.

In dialogues such as *Euthyphro* and *Meno*, Plato distinguishes between someone who has mere opinion (*doxa*) and someone who has knowledge (*episteme*). This starting-point is necessary in order to later on, in works such as the *Republic*, illustrate that *episteme* is the highest level of knowledge and insight that a person can achieve. It is particularly in *Republic* V-VII that Plato deals with the concept of the good both in regards to the individual person

¹³¹ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 89.

and the state.¹³² The individuals who have episteme, the philosophers, have true insight into the nature of the world and also into the world of ideas. They not only know the virtues, but most importantly they behave virtuously.

According to Plato, reason is what yields integrity and since philosophy embodies reason, it is thus the ideal for the individual person and for the state. From this, Plato arrives at the idea of the philosopher ruler or king.¹³³ The philosopher was the only type of man who was fit to rule because his “desires flow towards learning and everything of that sort ... [and] with the pleasures of the soul itself by itself, ... he’d abandon those pleasures that come through the body – if indeed he is a true philosopher and not merely a counterfeit one”.¹³⁴

Hence, Plato illustrates fairly high ideals for the philosopher (wise lover of wisdom), and he claims that until philosophers rule and political power is equated with philosophising, there can be no actualisation of the theory he has laid out for the ideal state.¹³⁵ Since the philosopher has knowledge about both the visible and the intelligible he is the only one fit to rule. Because he has knowledge about both our world and the world of ideas, the philosopher sees how everything is connected.

Plato built a system of ideals and ideas, and he theorised about the virtues and the idea of the good. Those with episteme would have knowledge about all the virtues and also the highest good, while people with doxa only have opinions about the phenomenal world. Hence they lack any insight about virtues and the idea of the good. The best way to live is to live a life with insight and knowledge as that is what yields happiness – both in thought and action. Naess has built a similar system of ideals and ideas. In his world people who merely have doxa can be likened to those who have little or no understanding of the togetherness that exist between humans and the rest of nature, and who are ignorant to the pain and suffering their lack of insight cause animals, and the destruction they cause to nature. Perhaps some are more aware, but they have yet to get real knowledge about the gravity of the situation and to engage in self-realisation in order to achieve episteme. The ones with episteme in Naess’ case are the ones who understand the connection between all things that exist on this planet (and in the universe) and act accordingly – anthropocentrism versus ecocentrism or egocentric versus ecocentric.

¹³² G.M.A. Grube, ‘Republic V-VII’, in *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy from Thales to Aristotle*, 4th edition, in S.M. Cohen, P. Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve eds, Hackett Publishing Company Inc., USA, 2011, p. 483-566.

¹³³ Grube, ‘Republic V and VII’, 2011, p. 506-516; 542-566.

¹³⁴ *ibid*, ‘Republic VI’, 485d.

¹³⁵ *ibid*, ‘Republic V’, 473d-e.

Like Plato, Naess' system is also assuming that those who have engaged in self-realisation, and have gained true knowledge about our togetherness with nature as a whole, have insight into both the visible and the intelligible. The best way for Naess to live is a life that embraces the idea of everything in nature having intrinsic value, and because one understands this, one does not take more than needs and one lives in harmony with everything and everyone, human or nonhuman alike.

Moral intellectualism merely assumes that a certain type of action will follow from a theoretical idea. Whether all philosophers in Plato's world managed to live virtuously I cannot say, but we have established that Naess himself does not succeed in crossing the bridge from moral knowledge to moral action. Obviously this does not mean that no one having engaged in self-realisation could. However, Naess' lack of consistency illustrates that his ideals might be too high for the majority to aim at. Episteme or self-realisation point at a kind of perfection, and as most people have only doxa or an unenlightened relationship with nature, the gap between status quo and the goal might be too big. As discussed above, theorising is one thing; following through with action is another.

3. The quality of life versus standard of living debate yields nothing of value because these terms are too culture-dependent

To illustrate my third claim I will bring in points 5 and 7 of the platform. They both deal with the issue of quality of life versus standard of living, and how changes in regards to our standard of living need to happen. Our focus needs to be on quality rather than standard. The points are: (5) "The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease."¹³⁶ (7) "The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of intrinsic value) rather than adhering to a high standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great."¹³⁷

As a comment to point 5 of the platform, Naess says that a reduction and a stabilisation of the human population is something that will take time, and temporary policies will have to be made. However, "this in no way excuses the present complacency."¹³⁸ But for this to be possible people will have to become aware of the extreme nature of the current situation,

¹³⁶ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 29..

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 31.

because the longer we wait the worse it will get, and the more drastic measures we will have to take. The consequence of our waiting to act is the decrease in richness and diversity of living and non-living parts of nature, and Naess argues that the extinction of species will rapidly worsen.¹³⁹ The only legitimate objection Naess considers is that if humans change their behaviour towards the environment and become more ecologically responsible so that non-human life can flourish, then a decrease in the human population is not needed. He further argues that point 5 “presupposes that the probability of a deep enough change in economics and technology is too small to take into account.”¹⁴⁰

Naess clarifies points 7 thus: “Some economists criticise the term ‘quality of life’ because it is supposed to be too vague. But, on closer inspection, what they consider to be vague is actually the non-quantifiable nature of the term. One cannot quantify adequately what is important for the quality of life as discussed here, and there is no need to do so (‘in original).”¹⁴¹ Quality of life is discussed several places in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*. Among other things, Naess asks the question: “If material standard of living and general affluence no longer suffice as principal objectives for all politics, what can we replace them with? Well-being? Quality of life?”¹⁴² Nature itself does not equal either for these, but the preservation and protection of it, can allow us to find well-being or quality of life through what nature has to offer. However, a society’s most fundamental key phrases speaking of well-being for the people, will speak of the future developmental goals for the country and how this is best realised. In Scandinavia, terms such as “well-being, welfare and standard of living”¹⁴³ are what people strive for. Naess proposes to focus on ‘quality of life’ rather than the three phrases being stressed in the Scandinavian societies, and for deep ecology the phrase has a central place.¹⁴⁴

The challenge is to determine with some level of precision what quality of life means. This is a significant and vast question. Naess argues that quality of life cannot avoid happiness, perfection and pleasure.¹⁴⁵ From earlier we remember that self-realisation leads to a state of some sort of perfection and this is the same perfection Naess is hinting at here. He argues that the attainment of these qualities (happiness, perfection and pleasure), and to the extent they are reached, will determine the quality of life for each individual. Further, the life quality of a

¹³⁹ ibid.

¹⁴⁰ ibid.

¹⁴¹ ibid.

¹⁴² ibid, p. 80.

¹⁴³ ibid, p. 84.

¹⁴⁴ ibid.

¹⁴⁵ ibid.

community will be determined by whether the qualities are reached by its members. Though the three concepts are suggested by Naess, he admits that there can be different conceptions as objectives, that each has their own way.¹⁴⁶ However, though there is an opening for several qualities, perhaps many will not know what quality of life means to them because they are too caught up in their standard of living. Naess implies that standard of living equals the way most Western people live today; in a city or suburb, in a house, with a car or two, perhaps a cabin and/or a boat. Most will also have mobile phones, Television, washing machines, a cooker and all sorts of luxuries that come with such a way of living. Naess thinks that such a lifestyle does not equal quality of life because quality of life has to do with a simple life; not taking more than you need, living most of the time in a mountain hut like Tvergastein (Naess' hut) for example, spending lots of time in nature, practicing self-realisation and consequently come to realise the togetherness there is between humans and every other part of nature.

There is no argument against Naess' own personal idea of quality of life, because it is his right to have such an opinion. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that many would agree with his conception of quality of life. If you asked numerous individuals in the Western world what they deemed quality of life, they would probably include many of the facilities and luxuries that come with a life in that society, i.e. their standard of living is closely linked with their idea of quality of life. Very few would agree with Naess that a life of quality means a simple life in nature where one only takes what one needs in order to survive.

The European Commission published a perception survey about quality of life in the cities in 2013, where quality of life includes health care services, public transport, schools, quality of the air, sports facilities, noise level, availability of retail shops, parks and green areas in the city to mention a few.¹⁴⁷ A good majority of the people asked if they were happy with their life in the city answered yes, and they were also mostly happy with the other items of the list, such as public transport in cities in wealthier countries. The result was that those who were least satisfied with life in the city, were inhabitants of cities in poorer countries such as Greece for example.¹⁴⁸ The World Health Organisation (WHO) published an article, 'Measuring Quality of Life', where health is at the top of what yields quality of life. WHO

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ European Union, *Quality of life in the cities*, Publications office of the European Union, Luxemburg, 2013, p. 6.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 7.

“defines health as “A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being not merely the absence of disease.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, WHO came to the conclusion that they define

Quality of life as individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns, varies. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of their environment.¹⁵⁰

The findings came from surveys done by fifteen collaborate centres around the world where patients with varying ailments were asked and health care workers.¹⁵¹ These two examples from the EU and the WHO are just to illustrate that quality of life can mean different things and it can embrace so much. It is so much more complex and diverse than Naess makes it seem. For one, if a person does not have a roof over his head or food in her stomach, they will likely not feel quality of life as long as they can spend time in nature and become aware of the connection between us and everything else. Quality of life must also include having what one thinks is important, met. Therefore, quality of life means various things to different people. In addition there is the assumption that once people have dwelled on the intrinsic value on all things and understood quality of life as Naess sees it, there will be the profound change in awareness and people will understand the difference between big and great. However, if there is no new awareness and no shift in consciousness this will not happen, which means that point 7 is futile.

Most people like their standard of living, and because they do like their way of life, their standard of living is closely connected with what they deem to be quality of life. I am not saying that I or anyone else is unwilling to give up anything to help nature, but the major changes Naess advocated are normatively implausible because we like the comfort our standard of living provides. Minor changes like turning the tap off while brushing our teeth or shampooing our hair, switching to more environmental friendly products and so on are changes most people will probably be willing to do. But major changes to their entire life in order to save ecosystems are not very likely, and hence basing a theory on such a change, is fruitless.

¹⁴⁹ WHOQOL, ‘Measuring Quality of Life’, *Division of Mental Health and Prevention of Substance Abuse*, 1997, p. 1; a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being is likely not fulfilled by any state however.

¹⁵⁰ WHOQOL, *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

Also, if we asked people in the developing world, I think it is safe to say that most of them would want the lifestyle we experience in the first world. Perhaps we want it or want to maintain it for the wrong reasons, maybe Naess is right that we are egocentric and ought to adopt a more ecocentric view of the world. But, even if he is right, people are not likely willing to make major changes in their lifestyle simply because they spend more time in nature. It is very possible to spend time in nature every day and not see the world as Naess does. It is possible to sit by a river and feel its power and the oneness between us and still not want to live a simple life in the mountains only taking what is needed to maintain survival. It is possible that for many quality of life is so closely tied up with standard of living that if they had to live like Naess proposes, they would not feel that their life had happiness, perfection and pleasure which sums up quality.

Of course Naess could argue back and say that people would feel a lack of happiness, perfection and pleasure because they are ignorant of the togetherness between us and nature as a whole. Once they realise the value of nature and our connection with it, they would be more attracted to a simple life and understand through self-realisation that such a life means a life of quality as opposed one of quantity. That may be true, but how are we then supposed to make people understand that a simple life satisfying one's vital needs only, is the best way to happiness, perfection and pleasure? It seems Naess and many others have tried to convince people of this, but because they do not seem to get through, perhaps it is better to allow people to live the life they want and find solutions that can work with our way of life instead of wasting time trying to convince people who obviously do not want to change. It is difficult, or in most cases nearly impossible to teach a child in their first year of school the curriculum of a child in their eighth grade, for instance. A more plausible way to go is to start at the level of the child and work with them in order to help them grow and learn, rather than expect them to embrace things they are not ready for and are unable to grasp. However, as they acquire knowledge they can be brought to higher levels of learning and some day they might reach the level Naess intends. But because this requires time, one has to start by teaching the child what they have the capacity to understand.

Moreover, it is in fact possible to combine our current way of life and also save the planet. If we focus on using our technology and our science for the betterment of the environment, we can continue our lifestyle while simultaneously helping the environment heal. For example,

by making use of genetic engineering, nuclear fission, and other technological advances available, it is plausible to help the environment while maintaining our current way of life.¹⁵²

Another point that is connected with our way of life, is Naess' lack of recognising that all types of environment are equally worthy of attention, and not just the wilderness or mere natural environments. Failure to acknowledge the value of housing projects, cities, parks, and various types of buildings, is a weakness in deep ecology and it can learn a lot from environmental pragmatism in this respect. For Naess giving such environments importance would probably be likened to anthropocentrism and hence not accepted, but valuing such types of environments do not mean losing sight of endangered environments or give less value to wilderness and natural areas. Obviously, some sort of ranking will take place as endangered environments get the highest priority, but man-made environments ought to make the list of environments to consider and protect. Humans are part of nature and our types of environment matter to us and need to be included.

Another issue for Naess in regards to our way of life in the West, is the fact that there is no planet that can sustain a human population of 8 billion people because of the rate of the destruction we then cause to environments and everything living within them.¹⁵³ Because of this, a shift towards quality of life rather than standard of living is necessary since our current standard of living is the main cause of the problem. However, if we focus merely on food, the European Parliament has published the 'STOA (Science and Technology Options Assessment) Summary' where they reveal possibilities for feeding 10 billion people.¹⁵⁴ What makes it possible to feed 10 billion people, according to the summary, are innovations in food technology. The new inventions are "sensor technology, sustainable packaging and refrigeration climate control, non-thermal pasteurisation and sterilisation, nano- and micro technology, innovative processes for utilisation of by-products, alternative processes requiring less energy or water, plant-based meat alternatives and information and knowledge transfer."¹⁵⁵ What these developments in technology aims at, is to "make a sufficient stable food product that is safe for human consumption (microbiologically and chemically) ... [giving] the product the required intrinsic quality aspects; e.g. digestibility, nutrient content, flavour, colour and texture."¹⁵⁶ The new innovations in food technology is further focused on creating new and better food products that can meet in increasing demand of food as the

¹⁵² M. Lynas, *The God Species*, Fourth Estate, USA, 2012.

¹⁵³ *ibid*, p. 100.

¹⁵⁴ H.C. Langelaan et.al, 'Technology options for feeding 10 billion people', *STOA European Union*, Brussels, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*, p. 7.

population grows. This will hopefully “alleviate the food security gap, account for demographic changes as well as changing consumer demands and prevent lifestyle-related diseases.”¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the dependency on high-value crops is something that hopefully can be minimised along with less consumption of water. The new technology used is also aimed at increasing the transparency of the food chains in order to create a greater food security globally, while simultaneously permitting a better cooperation within all the levels in the food supply industry and thus generate a greater level of trust for the consumer. Finally, they are hoping to translate results found scientifically from various disciplines into implementable technologies within a short timeframe.¹⁵⁸

Naess could certainly argue that the use of technologies and food innovations will not matter unless people are willing to eat meat-substitutes and insects for instance. Therefore, it is plausible to think that he would be against most of the innovation technologies discussed above. Even if it can enable the planet to sustain 10 billion people with food, it is likely that Naess would argue that the detrimental effect on the environment would still be too high a price to pay. Naess argues for quality of life as opposed to standard of living, and perhaps this argument would be an appropriate one in regards to point 5. If many enough people, particularly in the West, embraced the idea of quality of life rather than standard of living, perhaps a decrease would not be necessary, because solutions such as a plant-based diet would be accepted. If we in the West continue to live as we currently are, Naess is probably right; a decrease is necessary. Naess does not mention how this decrease and stabilisation is supposed to take place, however, only that it will take time.¹⁵⁹ Once again, this highlights the gap between theory and practice in Naess’ deep ecology.

There are further problems with Naess’ idea of quality of life rather than standard of living. Naturally, people strive for more. There are not many cultures left in this world that are untouched by modern society. And it seems that those who are aware of modern society’s way of life, strive for it. People in the developing world want to live like those in the first world. So, one question that comes to mind is how are we supposed to get people in the first world to live more like those in the developing world? And secondly, how are we supposed to extinguish the desire for a more prosperous life among those in the developing world? What Naess suggests appears to be for everyone to live as the newly discovered tribes hidden deep in the Amazon. In Naess’ ideal world it seems we would go back to small scale subsistence

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 30.

agriculture. Until about three hundred years ago humans were forced to mostly using their own power to utilise the Earth's bounty. However, the discovery of coal and the invention of a steam driven pump by Thomas Newcoman in 1712¹⁶⁰ changed the fate of human beings because we found a way to let machines' power do much of the work that the human muscle had had to do up until that point in time. Man was finally freed from the limits of his own muscles and wanting to go back seems unnatural and implausible. The industrial and political changes that sprang out of this change, altered the world and humans too, and Naess neglects the fact that people do not like to go backwards. Hence, he wants us to go back three hundred years and give up hard technology, and go back to mostly using soft technology, and the limits of our own muscle power that we finally went beyond with the invention of the steam driven pump. There is a reason why we moved forward with machines and did not hold on to the simple tools powered by our muscles; we all want more, we want comfort, we want standard of living that give us quality of life. We are more than 7 billion now, most strive for a first world standard of living, so where do we go from here, and how do we find a way to sustain that standard for all those people while not destroying the planet?¹⁶¹

4. Naess is shallower in his approach to environmental philosophy than he claims to be

My fourth and final claim states that Naess is shallower than he appears at first glance. For this claim I will use point 6 of the platform. Point 6 states: (6) "Significant change of life

¹⁶⁰ BBC, History, Historic figures, Thomas Newcoman (1663-1729), 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/newcomen_thomas.shtml

¹⁶¹ Perhaps more acceptable for Naess is the possibility for the solution of the population presented by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins in 'The Next Industrial Revolution' (2005). As the title suggests, they imagine a new industrial revolution that might "free up resources, reduce taxes on personal income, increase per-capita spending on social ills (while simultaneously reducing those ills), and begin to restore the damaged environment of the earth. These necessary changes done properly can promote economic efficiency, ecological conservation, and social equity" (ibid, p. 322). Hawken, Lovins and Lovins thus suggest a new type of capitalism and industry that can avert scarcity and create abundance for humans and the environment. They present it in four points: "Radical Resource Productivity ... Biomimicry ... Service and Flow Economy ... Investing in Natural Capital" (ibid, p. 328-9). Radical resource productivity opens up for a more efficient use of the resources which had three major benefits: "It slows resource depletion at one end of the value chain, lowers pollution at the other end, and provides a basis to increase worldwide employment with meaningful jobs" (ibid, p. 328). Biomimicry can help eliminate waste of materials "by redesigning industrial systems on biological lines that change the nature of industrial processes and materials, enabling the constant reuse of materials in continuous closed cycles, and often the elimination of toxicity" (ibid.). In such a system even the idea of waste can be eliminated as nothing would go to waste. Service flow and economy presupposes a change in the relationship between the producer and the consumer where one moves to a service and flow system from the current goods and purchase system. An economic service and flow system is better equipped at protecting the natural resources. As they (Hawken, Lovins and Lovins) argue such a shift "will entail a new perception of value, a shift from the acquisition of goods as a measure of affluence to an economy where the continuous receipt of quality, utility, and performance promotes well-being" (ibid, p. 329). Investing in natural capital suggests a refocusing and a reversal of the destruction of the planet into a more sustainable restoration that expand the natural capital. This will help the biosphere to produce more abundance in the ecosystems and yield more natural resources (ibid.). This will also benefit us humans as well as the rest of the environment. The four-fold argument for a new industrial revolution seems compatible with deep ecology. It aims at preserving and restoring ecosystems, saving animal lives and simultaneously benefitting human life. In such a system one would not have to focus on decreasing the human population, and as Naess only suggests it in order to save animals and ecosystems, it is plausible to assume that he would welcome any solution that allowed for the human population to flourish naturally as well as that of animals.

conditions for the better requires change in policies. These affect the basic economic, technological, and ideological structures.”¹⁶²

Clarification to point 6, explains that change in policy is required because the current economic growth seen by the industrial states are incompatible with points 1 through 5 of the platform. Instead of valuing things that there are plenty of, the existing “ideology tends to value things because they are scarce and because they have commodity on the market. There is prestige in vast consumption and waste ...”¹⁶³ Further, there is failure in the economic market to see value in ecological matters that need to change. Naess puts forward slogans like ‘self-determination’ and ‘think globally, act locally’ as key slogans of the changes that are required. Also, increasingly global action across borders is necessary, even if it goes against short-term goals of communities. For this to happen, Naess claims that the support of non-governmental organisations, such as the deep ecology movement, will become more and more important. This is because such organisations are able to act locally from the grassroots up, which will avoid any negative interference from governments.¹⁶⁴ For this to happen “soft, intermediate, and appropriate technologies are steps in this direction.”¹⁶⁵ Beyond saying that cultural diversity requires advanced technology, there is no mention as to what sort of advanced technology is accepted as soft, intermediate or appropriate technology.

For one, Naess argues for the importance of economics, and he acknowledges that within deep ecology economics has gotten a bit of a bad reputation as it is seen as unecological.¹⁶⁶ The reason is that nature is seldom mentioned in regards to economics. Hence, many environmentalists regard economics as something that aims at maintaining the human interest only, since it supposedly leaves out other species and nature.¹⁶⁷ Naess further argues that if “supporters of the deep ecology movement are to take part in politics at all, they have to have opinions on economic decisions.”¹⁶⁸ One solution in regards to economics that Naess proposes is something he calls ‘shadow-pricing’ nature. Shadow-pricing is the value something has when it is not exchanged on a market, but given value in another way: for instance, giving a river a certain value if it is not developed.¹⁶⁹ In this way we would get the

¹⁶² Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 29.

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid*, p. 104-129.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*, p. 175-6.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 106.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid*, p. 123-4.

“protection of nature into the framework of quantitative economic analysis.”¹⁷⁰ Hence, valuing nature before we interfere with it is preferable. However, less interference does not necessarily mean stepping back and leaving nature alone completely. For Naess it seems to mean interfering in ways that do no harm and that does not change anything in nature, but rather gives it room to heal from the changes we have already made.

What is more, Naess states that sometimes it is necessary “to propose solutions which are from a deep ecological view not the best or even good but which are much better than the others under consideration.”¹⁷¹ Thus, Naess might actually be open to embracing solutions that would not merge with all of deep ecology’s viewpoints as long as it yields the results we need. This is because such solutions might be better than other solutions that are under consideration. Because of Naess’ love of nature, I think he would accept a wider range of suggestions as long as it respected animals and nature, and worked towards the healing of the environment.

Additionally, according to Naess, the shallow ecology movement has ‘the health and affluence of people in the developed countries’ in mind only, but Naess himself speaks mostly of people in the West and how have to lower our standard of living. He rarely mentions the people in the developing world and how they might want to raise their standard of living in order to be able to experience quality of life. Moreover, his statement that it is natural for a human to care more for other humans, also leans more towards shallow than deep ecology. Thus, Naess is more in concordance with shallow ecology than he wants to be – whether this can turn out to be a good thing because most will be in concordance with shallow ecology, as opposed to deep ecology, reveals to be seen.

Conclusion

The four claims presented in chapter two, provide ample reasons to conclude that Naessian deep ecology is not a perfectly thought out theory. As shown, both the incoherence between theory and practice and within the theory renders deep ecology permanently injured, and perhaps even futile. Much of the disjointedness in deep ecology would have been avoided if the stress on nature having intrinsic value had been reduced. Because of this focus, the theory

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 124; Through investigations carried out in March and April of 1985 in Norway, it was revealed that people are willing to pay a little more for electricity if it means protecting the rivers from development.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

stumbles and ends up in bad philosophical shape. In addition, Naess himself contradicts himself when he aims at putting theory into action. Naess failing to follow through in action is almost bound to happen because of his unrealistic ideals about humans and their relationship with nature as a whole. Naess may have a different level of consciousness about nature than most people, but apparently not different enough since he cannot manage to follow his own ideas completely. Hence, we might settle that even though humanity has the level of consciousness it currently has, this does not equal mistreating nature or not finding a solution for the climate crisis. Obviously, changes have to be made, but starting from where we are is better than waiting for a change that might never come, because enough people might not realise that nature has intrinsic value and that we are one with it.

Chapter 3

Introduction

Like the rest of the human beings on this planet, Naess too is only human, but his ideological goals are too fairytale-like and the platform is not very useful. The platform does not offer deep ecology much in the way of advantages, rather the opposite. Instead it makes deep ecology look uncoordinated, incoherent and rigid at times. Let me now move on to taking a look at deep ecology seen from the perspective of the apron diagram, and whether perhaps that approach makes deep ecology more approachable and believable, in order for it to draw more supporters and be brought back to life. I will also bring environmental pragmatism to the table and see whether deep ecology can successfully adopt some ideas in order to become more practical, and thus approachable for the average person in the developed world. The reason I want to look into environmental pragmatism, and whether deep ecology can adopt ideas from the theory, is due to environmental pragmatism's pluralism. Environmental pragmatism does not get lost in monism and futile discussion regarding intrinsic value, but manages to stay pluralistic and focused on the task at hand; namely working towards finding practical solutions for resolving the climate crisis now.

Because Naess argues that deep ecology is pluralistic, and that the apron diagram to some extent illustrates this, environmental pragmatism is a good option for deep ecology to verify its pluralism, or lack thereof. If deep ecology turns out to be less pluralistic than Naess claims, then environmental pragmatism is a suitable theory to look towards because of its pluralistic nature. The question is whether the core values of deep ecology can be salvaged if such adoptions are to be made. Core values of deep ecology are the embracing of all living and non-living things and acknowledging their intrinsic value, and consequently their right to exist and flourish along the lines of human beings.

1. Environmental pragmatism and the deep ecology platform

The expression 'environmental pragmatism' was first coined by Andrew Light in 1992 at a conference in Budapest, and though pragmatism originally did not discuss environmental pragmatism as we find it today, it was "a philosophy of environments."¹⁷² Kelly A. Parker states that "[the] observations that the human sphere is embedded at every point in the broader natural sphere, that each inevitably affects the other in ways that are often impossible to

¹⁷² K.A. Parker, 'Pragmatism and Environmental Thought', in A. Light and E. Katz eds, *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 21.

predict, and that values emerge in the ongoing transactions between humans and environments ... are all central concepts for the pragmatists.”¹⁷³ Likewise with environmental philosophers and pragmatists today.

The goal of environmental pragmatism can be summed up thus: “[it] is concerned to develop strategies by which environmental ethics can contribute to the resolution of practical environmental problems.”¹⁷⁴ There are various theories of environmental pragmatism, but generally environmental pragmatists work toward finding effective and practical solutions that can be implemented presently. It emphasises that human beings are not separate from the world, but that we are in it and part of it. The world is not detached from us in any way and it accentuates the interrelatedness and connectedness between the various relationships that make up our world. Due to this interrelatedness and because all kinds of relationships are important, and because all sorts of environments are important, no single ethical concept can work as an absolute foundation as seen from a perspective of environmental pragmatism.¹⁷⁵ Further, the field “cannot tolerate theoretical delays to the contribution that philosophy may make to environmental questions.”¹⁷⁶ Hence, this calls for a decreasing importance on theoretical debates replaced with a stronger concern for a practical approach that will yield policy consensus.

Environmental pragmatism generally embraces a moral pluralism as opposed to moral monism. Moral pluralism aims at exploring “the complexity of ethical issues rather than the imposition of a single reductionist ethical framework onto a complex situation.”¹⁷⁷ Because environmental pragmatism calls for moral pluralism, it does not depend on arguments that rely on nature having intrinsic value. These issues will make matters continuously unhelpful and unproductive in finding practical solutions to the climate crisis that can be applied now. Because arguments based on nature having intrinsic value usually assume that nature’s needs are more important than humans needs, these arguments are not very fruitful for policy making and political action, as both tend to have human interests trump or at least be sidelined with nature. In addition, as claimed by Light, statements about nature having intrinsic nonanthropocentric value are very often on unstable philosophical ground as it is tough to argue for properly (case in point, Naess) – and also the discussion has been going on for years

¹⁷³ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ C. Palmer, ‘An Overview of Environmental Ethics’, in A. Light and H. Rolston III eds., *Environmental Ethics*, Blackwell Publishing, UK, 2003, p. 32.

¹⁷⁵ Parker, *op.cit.*, p. 26-9.

¹⁷⁶ Light and Katz, ‘Introduction’, in A. Light and E. Katz eds., *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ Palmer, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

without yielding any definite answers.¹⁷⁸ It is merely a battle of who can argue for their view most convincingly until someone else comes along and makes new and equally convincing statements for the opposing 'team'. Thus, it is time for a new approach and environmental pragmatism might be the right one at this stage.

Pragmatism's advance to living beings and the environment is easier to grasp than for example deep ecology:

Pragmatism [] sees *reality* as process and development, and sees *beings* as relationally defined centers of meaning rather than as singular entities that simply stand alongside one another in the world. It emphasizes not substantial beings, but interrelations, connectedness, transactions and entanglements as constitutive of reality. All of this is based on rigorous attention to what is actually there in experience, and not on what this or that philosophy suggests we should find (*italics in original*).¹⁷⁹

The first part of this quote looks similar to something Naess and the supporters of deep ecology might argue for, but the last sentence is what separates Naess from environmental pragmatism. Naess lacks the rigorous attention to what is actually present because he is more focused on what he thinks we should find or what we ought to see. Environmental pragmatism deals with what is actually there in the world right now, and wants to start from there. However, one can argue that what is actually there in experience can mean various different things to different individuals. And though that is true, I take Parker's argument to mean that pragmatism wants to deal with the status quo and not some idealised or imagined situation sometime in the future.

An additional strength of environmental pragmatism is its treatment of all environments as equally worthy of attention.¹⁸⁰ This includes environments such as cities, parks, housing projects and hospitals in addition to wilderness, oceans and mountain ranges. Though, like many other types of environmental theories, environmental pragmatism too places endangered environments before those that are not threatened, an attempt to understand all types of environment has a strong focus.¹⁸¹ Environmental pragmatism is also grounded enough to realise that we cannot avoid dealing with moral situations due to the variety of entities and all the various relations that can exist between these entities. Though there are arguments against it, environmental pragmatism embraces moral pluralism to deal with the various moral

¹⁷⁸ Light, 'Climate Ethics for Climate Action', 2011, in D. Schmidtz and E. Willott eds., *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters? What Really Works?*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011.

¹⁷⁹ Parker, op.cit, p. 25.

¹⁸⁰ As we saw in chapter two, this is a weakness in deep ecology.

¹⁸¹ Parker, *ibid*, p. 29.

situations one can come across when dealing with all sorts of entities and the relations among them.¹⁸²

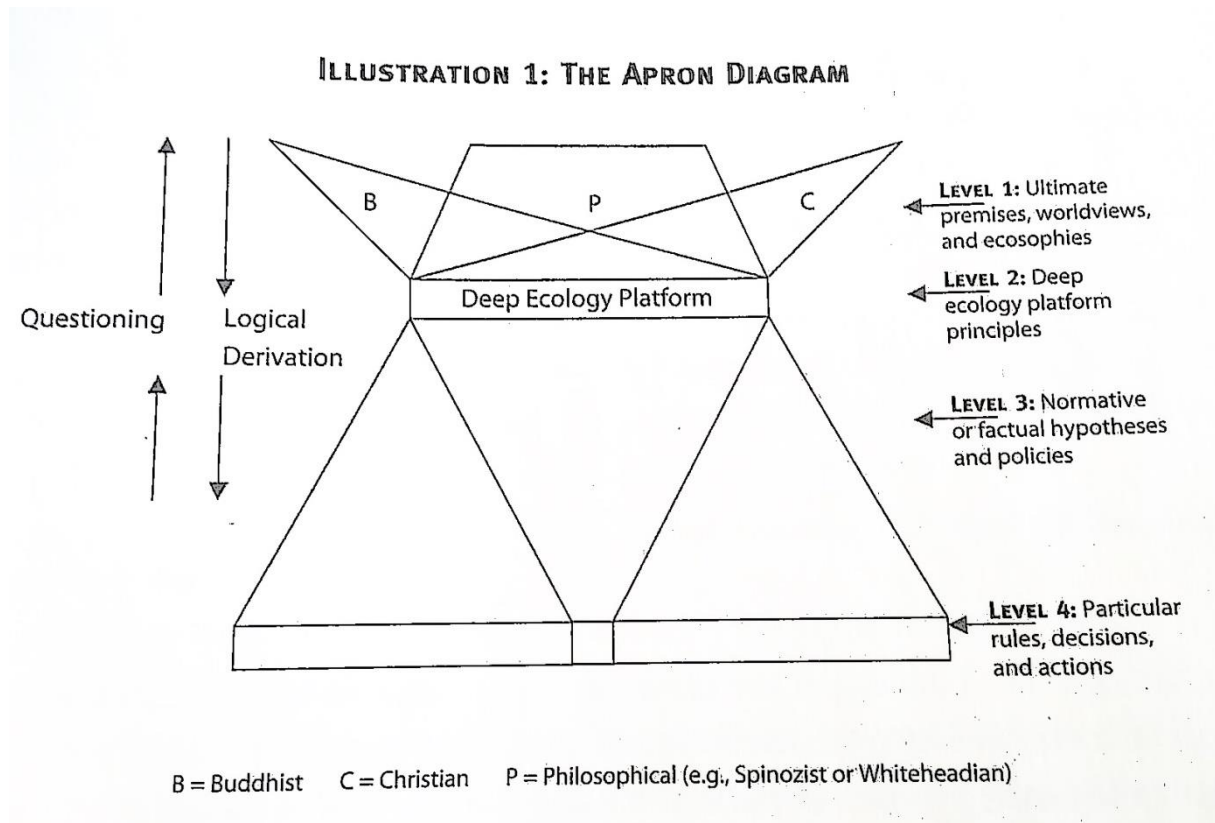
The question is whether Naess and deep ecology fits into the framework of environmental pragmatism, and if so, how? There are various types of environmental pragmatism, and though I make use of the work of several environmental pragmatists, the type closest to the ideas presented in this chapter, is Light's. One fruitful starting point for a comparison between environmental pragmatism and deep ecology, is the fact that both focus on the interrelatedness between human beings and all other parts of the environment. All types of relationships are important and humans are not outside of nature, but a connected part of it. Individual beings are relationally defined centres of meaning as opposed to separate organisms functioning alone. Naess' emphasis on gestalt theory is very similar to Parker's quote above. Gestalt theory, as we remember from chapter one, sees the gestalts that make up the world as separate units, but together they make up the whole. Naess and environmental pragmatism thus see the individual beings to be part of a greater whole. One can focus on one gestalt or one species, but that will leave the image incomplete. It is all the gestalts and the correlation between each of them that is important because only then do we get the entire picture. What Naess can learn from environmental pragmatism, however, is to place more focus on humans' part of the environment, and also embrace all types of environment.

If we think back to chapter two and focus our attention on the deep ecology platform, we run into trouble however. Because of its emphasis on intrinsic value, humans' excessive interference with nature and the ideological change that is posed as the solution to the crisis, Naess removes himself from the ideas of environmental pragmatism and pluralism. The platform, which appears to get much attention when discussing deep ecology, tightens the possibilities for deep ecology to be pragmatic because of its rigidity. Because the platform heavily depends on arguments that rely on nature having intrinsic value, it gets deep ecology in trouble. Such arguments are not very productive for political action and policy making because they argue against anthropocentrism. Nevertheless, there is a part of Naess' deep ecology that has been slightly overlooked that can illustrate why Naess is more practical than he lets on. If we leave behind the platform and shift our focus to the apron diagram, deep ecology suddenly becomes more approachable and practicable.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p. 32.

2. Environmental pragmatism and the pluralism of the apron diagram

As we saw, pluralism is an important part of environmental pragmatism and it is through a pluralistic approach that Naess has most in common with environmental pragmatism. Naess claimed to be pluralistic and the apron diagram as seen in *The Ecology of Wisdom* is perhaps the best illustration of Naess' pluralistic approach to the environmental crisis. The diagram, as it is laid out, yields a static model only, but supporters of the deep ecology movement can use it because they can modify the sentences on the various levels of the diagram. The apron diagram is as follows:¹⁸³



Above we saw that Naess and environmental pragmatism have in common the attitude that all parts are interconnected and are relationally defined centers of meaning rather than singular entities that merely stand in conjunction with one another. Hence, the foundation of both theories seems to be very similar. By using the apron diagram we see that one can approach deep ecology from a philosophical, religious or ethical viewpoint, and level 1 of the diagram demonstrates that the theory supports and allows for a plurality of attitudes among its followers. The platform, level 2, is derivable from various traditions and viewpoints. However, even if deep ecology, and to some extent the deep ecology platform, promotes a plurality of approaches, it may not be practical enough on levels 3 and 4 because of its focus

¹⁸³ Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, 2010, op.cit, p. 107.

on the idealistic changes that need to take place in order to the crisis to be solved. It does not allow for a plurality of solutions in its approach to solving the crisis, as we saw in chapter two. But, I will come back to this a bit later on. Still, because Naess is shallower and more pragmatic than he appears at first glance, we might still be able to find some remedying solutions, and environmental pragmatism might just be the addition that deep ecology needs to be able to convince people about how to mend the crisis.

Apart from advocating it himself, Naess has also been linked to pluralism by Light¹⁸⁴ and Andrew Brennan.¹⁸⁵ Light argues that even if one does not adhere to Naess' overall thesis, it is clear that the theory has managed to put its pluralism into practice in the deep ecology movement. Light refers to this as 'operationalized pluralism'.¹⁸⁶ According to Light, the practical pluralist idea can be defended because it is crucial for Naess that one can approach the principles of deep ecology from various foundations and beliefs. No matter where an individuals' starting point is, if one agrees with the basic hypothesis of deep ecology, and the eight points of the platform, this will hopefully build "a broader movement around the policies endorsed by deep ecologists."¹⁸⁷ Further, Light recognises that Naess "gives two reasons for embracing a practical form of pluralism."¹⁸⁸ The first is Naess' argument that uniformity in views leads to stagnation rather than progress and strength for environmental ethics. The second is that Naess stresses the importance for each individual to develop their own ecosophy starting from the same basic values.¹⁸⁹ Brennan, on the other hand, argues that though deep ecology can be seen as pluralistic, because it celebrates a plurality of backgrounds among the followers, the thesis still demands a unity at the level of the platform itself: "Any underlying philosophy which is inconsistent with the platform, will not be acceptable as a workable ecosophy."¹⁹⁰ Another constraint pointed out by Brennan is that any underlying philosophy's approach to deep ecology and the platform, can be rigid and monistic in its development of ethical principles.

Let us take a closer look at how Naess himself views the diagram and how it connects to pluralism. According to Naess, deep ecology embraces pluralism on all levels of the apron

¹⁸⁴ A. Light, 'The Case for a Practical Pluralism', in A. Light and H. Rolston III eds., *Environmental Ethics*, Blackwell Publishing, UK, 2003, p. 230.

¹⁸⁵ A. Brennan, 'Comment: Pluralism and Deep Ecology', in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan eds, *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., New York, 1999, p. 177.

¹⁸⁶ Light, 'The Case for a Practical Pluralism', 2003, op.cit, p. 230.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 240.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*, p. 240-1.

¹⁹⁰ Brennan, loc.cit.

diagram.¹⁹¹ The rich variety formed by the supporters give the movement its transcultural character, and for Naess that character is a pivotal part of the movement. Level 1 of the diagram is based on the premises, worldviews and ecosophies held by the individual followers of deep ecology, the platform and the movement. Naess insists that he does not intend people to agree with his own ecosophy, Ecosophy T, but form their own ecosophy that they feel at home with.¹⁹² Furthermore, there has to be some common values, which enable the person's own ecosophy "to serve as an individual's philosophical grounding for an acceptance of the principles or platform of deep ecology, as outlined at the close of chapter 1."¹⁹³ A positive aspect of levels 1 and 2 that Gamlund points out, is that Naess has been commended for his accentuation of the divide between level 1 and 2 of the apron diagram.¹⁹⁴ Naess' deep ecology would likely not have had as many supporters as it has had, and probably has, if he had insisted that everyone had to conform to his own Ecosophy T.¹⁹⁵

On level 2 we find the deep ecology platform, which "represents a condensed formulation of the deepest-level norms and hypothesis that most supporters of the deep ecology movement can agree upon."¹⁹⁶ Though the platform was formed to be a condensed formulation of deep ecology's premises that most of the supporters could agree on, Naess admits there is no point in attempting "to formulate a short (or long) version of level 2 that all supporters of deep ecology would like."¹⁹⁷ Hence, it seems that the formulation of level 2 is realistically not something Naess would expect all supporters to agree on, but they still have to concur with the statement that the eight points give.¹⁹⁸ Because supporters derive at the agreement of the platform from various backgrounds, and because they might disagree about what follows from the eight points of the platform, the movement can "be seen to manifest both plurality and unity."¹⁹⁹ Unity at level 2 due to the the agreement to the eight principles and what they signify, and plurality on the other levels.

Level 3 also illustrates pluralism, according to Naess, because a concrete norm can be derived from various standpoints. This level generates "more or less general consequences derived from the platform – guidelines for lifestyles and for policies of every kind...."²⁰⁰ Still, the

¹⁹¹ Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, 2010, op.cit, p. 106-111.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, p. 106; Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 37.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, p. 37-8.

¹⁹⁴ Gamlund, op.cit, p. 232-3.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, 2010, op.cit, p. 110.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 106.

many different worldviews the individual supporters bring to the table, is compatible with the platform and the deep ecology movement. From this there will also be numerous consequences derived from the platform due to the differences among the supporters. Consequences such as varying lifestyles and also differing policies of every kind are but a few. Due to the pluralist nature of the above levels, Naess feels that level 4, rules and actions to be performed, also allows for pluralism as the concrete situations and the practical decisions having to be made from them will vary accordingly.²⁰¹ He argues that level 4 “deals with concrete decisions in practical situations.”²⁰²

When looking at deep ecology from the point of the apron diagram and how Naess explains it, it appears as though deep ecology is pluralistic all the way through. However, as we saw in chapter two, it is not so simple when we go deeper into the theory, and particularly the platform. Naess celebrates a wide array of backgrounds and worldviews and he does stress that it is important for each individual to form their own ecosophy.²⁰³ But, because he stresses that people should form their ecosophies, there is a problem already at level 1. Level 1 is pluralistic in regards to varying backgrounds among the individual followers, but how realistic is it to assume that people in general will form their own ecosophies? A simple openness to various traditions, religions and backgrounds among the supporters would have sufficed without mentioning people forming their own premises, worldviews and ecosophies.

Naess states that when “one’s own personal code of values and a view of the world which guides one’s own decisions ...”²⁰⁴, is applied to questions about oneself and nature, one forms one’s own ecosophy.²⁰⁵ Thus, in order to form one’s own ecosophy, one will have to have an understanding of one’s own idea of what it means to be good, and from there engage in behaviour that concurs with one’s idea of the good.²⁰⁶ It is questionable whether people in general have formed a complete conception of what it means to be good and behave accordingly. Naess is too optimistic in the assumption that people will have formulated their own personal code of values that will guide their actions. Plausibly not many people will have fashioned their own ideas of the good that they live by. Though level 1 is pluralistic because it celebrates an array of backgrounds, it does raise too many questions due to Naess’ assumptions and ideals. Furthermore, if we go along with the assumption that some people

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 113-4.

²⁰² A. Naess, ‘Intuition, Intrinsic Value, and Deep Ecology’, in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan eds, *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., New York, 1999, p. 167.

²⁰³ Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 2001, op.cit, p. 36-7.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Once more, the Platonic element of Naessian deep ecology is very visible, and again, it does deep ecology no favours.

have formulated their own personal code of values, they still have to be in agreement about the platform, level 2.

The underlying assumption that supporters have to agree with the general ideas of the platform, works against Naess' pluralism. Because level 2 fails to be pluralistic, it would seem we can state that levels 3 and 4 are not either – if they are to be derived at from level 2. Consequently, though there is concern already at level 1, I agree with Brennan that Naess' pluralism gets into trouble (mainly) on level 2 because of the platform. The problem with Light's argument is his lack of insight into the problems with levels 1 and 2. Brennan is more realistic in terms of the issue with the demand for unity at level 2.

Level 3's norms can be derived from various standpoints and are supposed to function as guidelines for lifestyle and policies. The problem is that level 3 more or less originates from the platform. Because of the problems with the platform, and because levels 3 and 4 are mostly derived from level 2, we get stuck in the ideas of intrinsic value, change of consciousness and self-realisation. Through these ideas Naess' contradiction becomes more apparent and the pluralism withers. Consequently, the pressing issue is whether Naessian deep ecology is as pluralistic as he argues it is. How can it thus be made into a thesis that convinces people to work for the betterment of the climate crisis, if it can be done at all? It would seem that the obvious solution is to keep the focus on levels 3 and 4. One can have different theories that start from different principles (levels 1 and 2), but they coincide when it comes to the norms and policies, at level 3, and from there they spread out again at level 4 in regards to action.

If Naessian ecology accepted an interrelatedness of values, whether anthropocentric or ecocentric, that would allow for a sort of "ecology of values".²⁰⁷ According to Anthony Weston, such an ecology of values "is resilient under stress, because, when put to question, a value can draw upon those other values, beliefs, etc. which hold it in place in the larger system. At the same time, though, every value is open to critical challenge and change, because each value is also *at stake* precisely with those related values, beliefs, etc. which on other occasions reinforces it (*italics in original*)."²⁰⁸ If this attitude to values is embraced, it illustrates that instead of adamantly insisting on one type of value being more correct than the other types, we realise that what we are "left with [is] a plurality of concrete values, in which

²⁰⁷ A. Weston, 'Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism on Environmental Ethics', in A. Light and H. Rolston III eds, *Environmental Ethics*, Blackwell Publishing, UK, 2003, p. 307.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

many different kinds of value, and many different sources of value, can be recognized as serious and deep without requiring further reduction to some single all end in itself.”²⁰⁹ Weston also states that “there is every reason to think that respect for other life forms and concern for natural environments are among those values.”²¹⁰ Environmental pragmatism, for example, has no problem realising that animals and plants have value and need to be protected. It can thus easily be realised that animals and plants have other kinds of value, and thus one ought treat them with respect and want to protect and save them.

An ecology of values is more fruitful in political discussions because politics is more often about preserving human interests as opposed to nature’s.²¹¹ Therefore, Naess ought to embrace an ecology of values in order to make a greater impact politically. Embracing a discussion about preserving human interest, does not necessarily mean that other beings are left out of the discussion, but it means that various types of value ought to play a part of political discussions – including the value of humans. Though Naess suggests that the human population ought to decrease in number in order for nature to prosper, it probably still means that he does care about human beings at all.²¹² He does after all argue that human vital needs trump that of animals as it is natural for us to want to stay alive by killing them.

Consequently, there is no need for an endless discussion of whether nature has intrinsic value or not. If one, for example, sees that we need to save a habitat, the reason for saving it should not be the prevailing issue, actually saving the habitat should. Whether we save it because the ecosystem and the animals that are part of it, have intrinsic value, whether we save it because we think it can have value for us in the future, or we simply save it because we think it has aesthetic value as it currently is, should not matter as long we save it. Saving it will benefit every part of the habitat and also the beauty we may find it in and the use it may or may not have in the future or here and now. Hence, saving it for whatever reason is far better than not saving it at all because we got lost in a discussion as to why we should save it in the first place. And this goes for the planet as well.

It is clear that something more needs to be done than what we are currently doing, so instead of arguing about why we should do it, it is better to actually just do it. Such an approach is impossible from a deep ecological standpoint because of level 2 of the apron diagram due to

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

²¹¹ A. Light, ‘Contemporary Environmental Ethics From Metaethics to Public Philosophy’, *Metaphilosophy*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2002.

²¹² See H. Glasser, ‘Naess’ Deep Ecology: Implications for the Human Prospect and Challenges for the Future’, *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2011, pp. 52-77 for discussion on this topic.

the platform's adamant stress on intrinsic value being the reason we ought to take action. Such a demand as to why we ought to act merely hinders action because we get caught in the discussion rather than focusing on how we act now. As Brennan argues, there is a demand for unity on level 2, and that unity, for one, is the idea of intrinsic value shared by all beings. Sadly, the demand for unity hinders action towards saving animals and habitats. However, if we focus on level 3 of the apron diagram, this opens up for action no matter the reason. Different beliefs and formulations of those beliefs do not have to hinder policymaking and henceforth action. In general people are pluralists. We do not agree on all things, but we can agree that polar bears need saving and CO2 emissions need to decrease. From this agreement, norms and policies are made.

As Brennan he states, Naess obviously recognises the plurality among the ultimate premises, but it is combined with unity as opposed to plurality at level 2, the platform. Consequently, the platform gives a limit as to how far plurality can extend, and as was quoted above: "Any underlying philosophy which is inconsistent with the platform, will not be acceptable as a workable ecosophy."²¹³ For example, an underlying anthropocentric or shallow philosophy will not be acceptable as a workable ecosophy in regards to deep ecology or the platform. Hence, Naess shows the constraint as to how far he is willing to extend plurality. Though he embraces plurality it is only to a certain extent. Therefore, it would be beneficial for Naess and deep ecology to loosen the constraint completely and allow for any type of philosophy, whether it be ecocentric or anthropocentric, to approach deep ecology and find merging points as in an overlapping consensus. Even if the starting point for several theories is far apart, most will agree that we need to take action now because the global situation is urgent. Thus, instead of focusing on what differs between the various theories, it is a much better use of time and resources to instead focus on what they all have in common – even if it is only one thing – the global crisis and that something needs to be done. As a result, focusing on levels 3 and 4 of the diagram is more fruitful than focusing on all levels.

One can have varying sets of beliefs and backgrounds, but one can still agree that policies need to be made in order to protect the environment and stop the climate crisis. Level 3 can be open to some interesting pluralistic ideas and agreements. There can for instance be agreement that the polar bears need protecting, CO2 emissions need to be decreased, endangered species require immediate attention, cutting down rain forest is devastating for the Earth and the climate crisis, and from this policies can be made. Agreements such as these

²¹³ Brennan, loc.cit.

concur with environmental pragmatism's approach to the crisis, and they are pluralistic. There is no need to agree on level 2 in order to understand that polar bears need protecting or that CO2 emissions are too high in many countries. Neither is there a need to stress the varying backgrounds of the supporters on level 1 since it does not matter for the outcome on level 3. Consequently, levels 1 and 2 do not add much to the apron diagram and should be altered. Level 1 ought to have less stress on people forming their own personal code of values, and simply being just different people with different religions and backgrounds. Level 2 needs heavy altering so it too can be pluralistic.

If we focus on level 3 independent of level 2, level 4 is pluralistic as well. When we give up the idea that a change in consciousness needs to happen before we can save the planet, we can implement practical changes to level 4. Therefore, with the right focus on the apron diagram, and with some alterations, Naessian deep ecology can be more pluralistic and practical all the way through. The ideas of self-realisation and a change in consciousness is tied up in the platform, so by changing level 2 of the diagram, levels 3 and 4 will change as well, and thus also the cause of action, and there could be practical action as Naess intends – though in a different manner than he envisions.

I think it is safe to say that enough people are aware of the crisis as it is; there is no need for a different level of consciousness to know that something needs to be done. Of course, Naess could still argue that we still need a change in consciousness to solve the crisis even if enough people are aware of the issues at hand, and therefore deep ecology is the right way forward in regards to the climate crisis. However, as was discussed in chapter two, simply relying on such a change is insufficient. Being pragmatic and coming together, bridging our differences and working together will yield a workable solution much faster than any theory attempting to do so alone. Of course environmental pragmatism is a theory as well, and as such it likely has its flaws, but it is open to embracing aspects of various theories and focusing on the problem at hand as opposed to focusing on being right, and that is why I think it is important to give it more attention.

Naess displays too little faith in people and how they currently are. Rather than giving people the incentive to want to change, deep ecology might make people want to give up before they even start, because the perfection Naess hints at does not seem natural or perhaps achievable. Hence, instead of telling people they need to change, enlighten them on what the problem is and what we together can do to solve it.

Conclusion

Environmental pragmatism does not demand or argue for individuals to change or that only one theory is the right one. It encourages a diversity of value theories because nature is diverse and the sources of value are numerous. Thus, by implementing the diversity of value theories from environmental pragmatism to levels 1 and 2 of the apron diagram, we get the plurality we need on level 3 which continues on to level 4. Therefore, such openness to diversity, has practical advantages “because an environmental ethics sufficient to motivate enough people to extend moral consideration to the nonhuman natural world would have to appeal to a broader range of intuitions about the value of nature than is found in the work of any single approach to environmental ethics.”²¹⁴ Being pragmatic does not entail that nature does not have intrinsic value or is worth saving. It merely means that the question of value is less important than practical action. If Naess could embrace being more shallow than he admits to, and was shown to be, he would also be more pragmatic and thus likely a part of the solution, as opposed to merely a part of the endless discussion as to what theory is more correct.

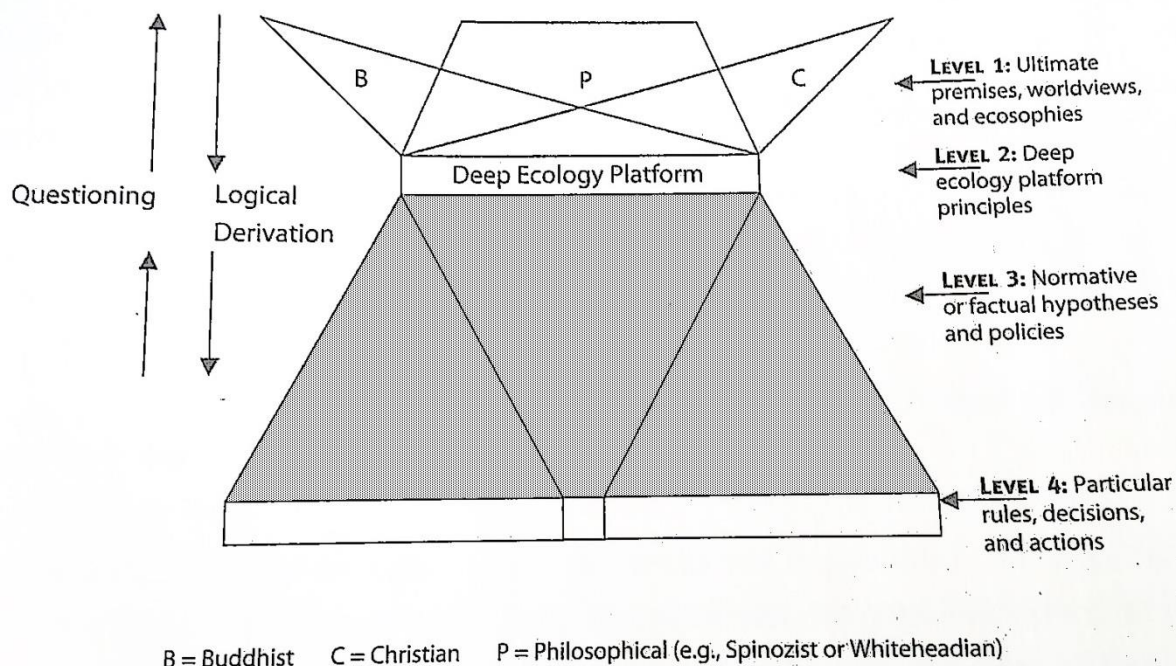
²¹⁴ Light, ‘The Case for a Practical Pluralism’, 2003, op.cit, p. 229-30.

Conclusion

Though Naess claims to be pluralistic throughout the thesis, his suggested solution contradicts that. Because of his moral monism he ends up contradicting himself due to the commitments he forces himself to stick with because of his claims. As Light agrees “a monist would necessarily be committed to rejecting the philosophical basis of any scheme of environmental value that differed from the one they were committed to defending, and would most likely be compelled to reject alternative schemes of value even if these schemes justified the same policy end for different reasons.”²¹⁵ By stubbornly insisting on the intrinsic value of nature, our togetherness with it, self-realisation and change in consciousness, Naess has to reject alternative theories that justify the same policies and ends that he himself embraces. Thus, Naess’ apron diagram looks pluralistic, but once we get to level 2 his monism comes to the surface. Consequently, the pluralism is more cosmetic than structural. But, by loosening the rope a little and not being adamant that one’s theory is the more suitable one, one does not have to reject other theories that work towards the same goal. In addition, deep ecology’s pluralism would become structural. As I see it, environmental pragmatism is a theory that allows other theories to maintain their individuality whilst working together for a common goal. As such, it would do deep ecology good to embrace the same openness. We can use the apron diagram again to illustrate that several theories starting from different places, levels 1 and 2, can join forces on level 3, and thus also plausibly level 4, and work towards remedying the climate crisis. By adopting environmental pragmatism’s focus on problem-solving, deep ecology might expand its already shallow tendencies, and be part of the solution:

²¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 230.

ILLUSTRATION 1: THE APRON DIAGRAM



If we take B, P and C on level 1, and there can be many more, to each represent a theory with its various claims (rather than an individual supporter with his or her own personal code of values), there will be distinct claims made by each thesis, level 2, due to their varying backgrounds, but there will also be some claims that overlap with one or more of the other theories. This happens at level 3 where the norms and policies are formed. Acknowledging that all parts of nature ought to be treated with respect, and that there is a climate crisis that needs to be dealt with, is probably something most environmental theories can agree on – including deep ecology. As Naess stated, sometimes one has to accept and propose solutions that does not necessarily agree with the deep ecological viewpoint, when better solutions are lacking. Because the climate crisis keeps worsening, perhaps deep ecology would embrace the more pluralistic ideas of environmental pragmatism, and thus become more practical. Following this, levels 1 and 2 are easily changed, and they have both become more realistic, while level 2 has become pluralistic as well. By accepting the various theories' backgrounds and formulations towards the climate crisis, the apron diagram, can be pluralistic on all 4 levels. When levels 1 and 2 are altered, the attention can be shifted to level 3, the grey area of the apron diagram above, where the unity within pluralism happens. As was mentioned earlier, we can have different theories starting from different principles, but still coinciding

when it comes to the formulation of norms and policies, level 3. Saving the planet can happen on level 3 because that is where we form policies and norms that guide actions. By shifting the focus to saving the planet, rather than convincing followers that deep ecology is the right theory to adhere to; deep ecology becomes pragmatic on all 4 levels. Thus, on level 4 there is also pluralism, because there can be varying actions according to the norms and policies. Doubtfully, only one type of action will yield positive results. Furthermore, plurality can be seen on level 4 through disagreements on how to implement changes from the policies decided at level 3.

After having stripped away the discussion of intrinsic value, change in consciousness, quality of life versus standard of living and self-realisation, and attempted to make deep ecology more pluralistic, one can wonder if there is anything left to deep ecology. From the looks of it, it appears there is not. However, I do not see that as a problem because as I have shown, deep ecology, as is, does not yield much towards solving the climate crisis. So it would seem that in order for deep ecology to be part of solving the climate crisis, it can be deep ecology no more. What we can do, however, in order to salvage some part of Naessian deep ecology, is to take the apron diagram, with a heavily transformed level 2, and a tweaked level 1, and start from there. In fact, it seems that the only alternative is to revise the eight principles of the platform ²¹⁶ in order to make use of the diagram, on all levels, as a tool for rectifying the climate crisis. Revising of the deep ecology platform will also leave deep ecology in much better shape.

Deep ecology no doubt made a great impact in its infancy, and in the history of environmental philosophy and ethics it is an important piece. However, for Naessian deep ecology to still be counted as an important and viable theory that can be utilised as part of the solution for the climate crisis, the apron diagram is where the focus ought to be. Through focusing on the diagram we see that Naess has all the material he needs in order to be more open and practical. Thus, instead of getting stuck with the deep ecology platform, the apron diagram reveals new possibilities that just might allow a part of deep ecology to find a new beginning, and be brought back to life on the environmental scene.

²¹⁶ Revising the platform is outside the scope of this thesis, but for future work in this field, it might be worth it to spend time forming a new and flexible platform.

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